

# Minutes: Student Staff Liaison Committee

## English Language Education



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Centre for Open Learning

15<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Present:**

Camilla Green (CG)  
Tom Pritchard (TP)  
Jingxin Luo (JL)  
Yishu Hu (YH)  
Benjamin McNab (BM)

Chair  
Course Director, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)  
Programme Rep, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)  
Programme Rep, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)  
Teaching Office

**Apologies:**

Rowan Murray (RM) Director of Quality

Start Time:	14:30
End Time:	15:08

1	<b>Welcome / Agenda</b>	CG
	CG welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief explanation of the remit and conduct of the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC).	
2	<b>Matters arising from last meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018</b>	TP
	<p>TP address matters arising from the last meeting of the SSLC on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018</p> <p><b>Microwave / Hot Water Faucets</b></p> <p>TP had raised the possibility of installing a microwave for student use with the COL Facilities Manager. TP confirmed that it will not be possible to install a microwave due to Health and Safety laws.</p> <p>TP also discussed the installation of hot water faucets with the COL Facilities Manager. The COL Facilities Manager has suggested that installation may be possible and has agreed to refer the matter to the University Estates Department for further consideration.</p> <p><b>Classrooms</b></p> <p>Students had previously expressed dissatisfaction with being based in several different classrooms. TP confirmed that in light of student feedback, Term 2 classes were now scheduled to be held in the same classroom.</p>	

	<p><b>IELTS Express Course Book</b></p> <p>The SSLC was previously informed that the IELTS Express course book was not very popular with EGAP students. TP confirmed that this course book will not be used again within English Language Education (ELE).</p> <p><b>Progress Tests</b></p> <p>The SSLC was previously informed that students would like teachers to set a more formal test on a monthly basis. TP has discussed this with EGAP teachers. TP informed the SSLC that EGAP students should use the tests available in course books in use for Term 2.</p> <p><b>IELTS Testing</b></p> <p>The SSLC was previously informed that the majority of EGAP3 and EGAP4 students are required to meet the IELTS requirements, so would like to sit practice IELTS examinations under examination conditions as part of the afternoon classes. TP has discussed this with EGAP teachers – tests under exam conditions have been introduced in some of the Term 2 classes.</p>	
3	<p><b>English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)</b></p>	
	<p>YH asked her classmates to provide written feedback. 14 students provided responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students find mid-term feedback cards very useful.</li> <li>• Teachers have made changes in response to feedback.</li> <li>• Students are very happy with teaching in Term 2.</li> <li>• Students would like a kettle to be available. TP replied that it was not possible but reiterated that the installation of hot water faucets for student use was being considered by the COL Facilities Manager.</li> <li>• Some students find the IELTS class boring. TP replied that while students could sit practice IELTS exams under exam conditions, it was impossible to replicate the feelings that students may have prior to an actual exam.</li> </ul> <p>JL Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of students find mid-term feedback cards very useful, though some students noted that they do not have enough time to think about their views and provide useful feedback there and then.</li> <li>• Students really appreciate the teaching style in the current class.</li> <li>• Some students asked if they could have the same teacher throughout the term. TP replied that teacher availability depended on schedules. Where possible, they will look to maintain the same teacher throughout the term.</li> <li>• Some students would prefer more focus on IELTS. TP noted that the purpose of EGAP was to provide students with transferrable skills in order to prepare them for their day-to-day lives and postgraduate study. EGAP was not designed specifically to prepare students to sit the IELTS exam. The IELTS exam was a “gatekeeping exam” for university entry requirements but otherwise had no real value. TP stressed that it was more important for students to build their overall language skills – such preparation would indirectly prepare students for the IELTS exam.</li> </ul> <p>CG agreed with TP’s position and asked the Programme Reps to reiterate TP’s position to EGAP students. CG advised that it would be beneficial for students to attend EGAP classes prior to IELTS exams, rather than studying independently.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students expressed concern at the limited number of course choices available for the afternoon classes. TP replied that although a large number of course choices could be offered to students, only four classes can be scheduled in the afternoon timetable: many students would be disappointed if their course choices was not running.</li> </ul> <p>JL suggested that students could inform EGAP teachers of their intended specialisms at the start of each academic year: EGAP teachers could then arrange course choices to match student specialisms. TP suggested that it would not be practical to design and schedule such courses in a limited timeframe (six weeks).</p> <p>CG confirmed that it would be very difficult to plan / develop / design course choices around the intended specialisms of EGAP students each academic year. Such a process would require additional time and resources and may end up favouring students on a particular specialism.</p> <p>TP noted that EGAP was designed to develop students' language skills for use across a variety of situations. EGAP was not a content-based course catering towards one particular specialism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JL noted that one student asked for classes to be scheduled earlier in the afternoon. TP confirmed that ELE staff were reviewing the class timetables for the next academic year but that it would not be possible to reschedule classes this term, due to lack of available rooms.</li> <li>JL stressed that students wanted preparations for the IELTS exam to be given priority. TP replied that while teachers were conscious of IELTS and sympathetic to the stresses of the IELTS exam, EGAP is not an IELTS preparation course and is not advertised as such on the University website. CG stressed that EGAP focuses on teaching the language and academic skills required for postgraduate study, not just the narrow requirements of IELTS.</li> <li>YH confirmed that writing for IELTS was very different to academic writing and made clear that CG's academic writing class was very helpful in this regard.</li> </ul>	
4	<b>Discussion of Programme Reps Experiences</b>	
	<p>CG asked the Programme Reps for their views on the experience of being a rep and if they would like to continue in the role for another term. YH replied that she would like to continue in the role but may not be able to continue on EGAP for the whole of Term 3. JL would be happy to continue in the Programme Rep role in Term 3.</p> <p>CG thanked the Programme Reps for their professional work.</p>	
5	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<p>No other business was presented to the Committee.</p> <p><b>The Committee was adjourned at 15:08.</b></p>	