

Minutes: Staff Student Liaison Committee



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Centre for Open Learning

Languages for All

Tuesday, 19th March 2019

Present: Jeanette Rissmann (**JR**) Chair; Language Programme Coordinator
 Ivan Sun (**IS**) Programme Representative – Beginners
 Ewa Frejowska (**EF**) Programme Representatives – Beginners
 Gina Everson (**GE**) Programme Representative – Elementary
 Fim Krisanabal (**FK**) Programme Representative – Upper Intermediate
 Kameliya Skerleva (**KS**) Secretary; Teaching Office Administrator – Credit & QA

Apologies: Rowan Murray (**RM**) Director of Quality

Start Time: 15:33

End Time: 16:45

1	Welcome / Agenda	JR						
	<p>JR thanked everyone present and welcomed the two new Programme Representatives – EF and FK. JR explained that the third new Programme Representative resigned the role due to work commitments. The Programme Representative for Advanced language classes is taking a term off, but will return in Term 3.</p> <p>JR explained the Programme Representative’s role and the format of the meeting to the new Programme Representatives.</p>							
2	Updates on developments at LfA	JR						
	<p>JR updated the Committee on the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Head of Languages for All will start at the end of April. • Academic restructuring is underway at the Centre for Open Learning <p>Neither of these new developments should affect the running of languages courses.</p>							
3	Updates on issues raised at the last SSLC meeting	JR						
	<p>JR reviewed the minutes of the SSLC meeting held on 26th November 2018 and provided the following responses to the suggestions made in Term 1:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a) Item 4. Programme Representatives Items: Online Feedback Form</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">Suggestion:</td> <td>Open the online feedback form for longer than two weeks – not enough time for the representatives to gather sufficient feedback from students.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Action:</td> <td>JR and RM to discuss the availability of the online form with COL Communications</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Response:</td> <td>The feedback form was kept open longer in Term 2, allowing continuous feedback from students.</td> </tr> </table>	Suggestion:	Open the online feedback form for longer than two weeks – not enough time for the representatives to gather sufficient feedback from students.	Action:	JR and RM to discuss the availability of the online form with COL Communications	Response:	The feedback form was kept open longer in Term 2, allowing continuous feedback from students.	
Suggestion:	Open the online feedback form for longer than two weeks – not enough time for the representatives to gather sufficient feedback from students.							
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b) Item 4. Programme Representatives Items: Visibility and Webpage

Suggestion:	Help promote the Student Representatives Role and improve the visibility of Student Representative webpage
Action already taken:	Plans in place to introduce notice boards to raise awareness of the Programme Reps. This has to be in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy.
Further action:	Processes and systems to be discussed during a review meeting planned for 4 th December 2018.
Response:	The webpage has been redesigned and updated with better information and improved page navigation. The provision of notice boards is in progress for Paterson's Land, Thomson's Land and Charteris Land.

c) Item 5.2: Rooms

Suggestion:	Provide adequate rooms that take into account class size and noise factors
Action already taken:	Discussions are underway at College and University level to improve learning and teaching space provision across the University, however changes are unlikely to be immediate due to limited room availability and multiple competing demands.
Response:	Work in progress to address the rooming issues across the Centre for Open Learning. At the moment, it is not always possible to find the most suitable rooms for all classes.

d) Item 5.5: Library / Resources / Wikis

Suggestion:	Improve access to resources
Action:	JR to revisit Learn accessibility and RM to look into the possibility of at least allowing access to University online resources such as e-books in the UoE Library catalogue.
Response:	A small pilot will be launched to test the use of Learn for several LfA courses in Term 3, with the aim to roll out the use of the Virtual Learning Environment from the next academic year. Booklists are now sent to Blackwell's earlier to ensure that books are available to students at the start of Term.

e) Item 5.3: Course Books

Issues	Not all course books available at Blackwell's for the start of term 1
Action	Discuss with Blackwell's an order schedule that will ensure that students can buy course books before start of term
Response	Meeting scheduled in term 3 with Blackwell's rep to discuss issue

4	Feedback from LfA Students and Discussion	IS, EF, GE, FK
	JR explained the different ways, in which student feedback is gathered, and noted that some of the comments made on the online form should have been sent via the mid-Term or end-of-Term feedback mechanisms.	

The Programme Representatives reviewed the feedback submitted via the Online Feedback Form. The following matters were raised by LfA students:

4.1 Use of English vs. foreign language

- Some students feel that tutors should consider adapting the use of foreign language to the level and pace of the class – especially when the tutor is explaining grammatical rules to Beginners level students.

JR emphasised again that classroom language will always be the language to be taught but tutors make adjustments dependent on level of students and topic discussed. JR agreed to remind tutors of flexibility.

4.2 Feedback Provision

- Students are not sufficiently aware of their Programme Reps and tutors should be more involved in raising awareness of the Programme Representatives and the different ways in which student could provide feedback
- Tutors could introduce the Programme Representatives for all of LfA during the first class

JR pointed out that Programme Reps are not always confirmed by the first class, however tutors should raise awareness of the Reps later on during the Term.

Suggestion:	Introduce a complaint form in order to keep the online feedback form focused on matters arising at programme-level. Inform students in class about how to make a complaint.
Action already taken	Information on how to make a complaint is already available on the COL website.
Further action	Make sure that students are aware of the different forms of feedback, including complaints.

4.3 Rooming for the LfA Film Club

Suggestion:	Ensure that the rooms allocated to the LfA Film Club are suitable – some of the rooms had no blinds and students could not see the film.
Action already taken	LfA team is aware of this issue and is trying to block-book suitable screening locations in the future

4.4 Timing of classes

- Classes take place too late in the day and some students feel tired to attend their evening class.

JR explained that classes start at 18:30 in order to capture students from different backgrounds. A more varied schedule is possible for some of the beginner’s levels classes, but is not viable for the higher levels or lesser taught languages. Tutors will provide information and handouts to students who miss a class via wiki or email.

JR pointed out that, when students are not able to make their class, they should not attend parallel classes on a different evening. This is required for Health and Safety concerns and should not be encouraged by course tutors.

	<p>4.5 Progression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students will not be able to continue into Term 3 due to clashes with exams and placements <p>JR informed the Programme Representatives that the Centre for Open Learning offers languages course in the summer, which could be an option for some students who miss Term 3.</p>	
5.	Mid-term course feedback	JR
	<p>JR explained that the Mid-term Feedback Exercise offers an informal opportunity for tutors to gather and respond to individual student feedback. Where possible, changes are implemented as the course continues, i.e. if students require more speaking exercises, slower explanation of grammar etc.</p>	
6.	Programme Representative Experience	IS, EF, GE, FK
	<p>The Programme Representatives reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with students is their main concern as well as students' lack of awareness of who their representatives are. It is difficult to contact students who are not registered at the University of Edinburgh or to know the students within their levels or the different language groups. It would be helpful if tutors do more to raise awareness of the language level reps and encourage students to contact their reps. 	
	AOB	
	<p>JR informed the committee that the end-of-term Course Enhancement Questionnaires will be sent out to students from 25th March 2019.</p> <p>New programme representatives for Term 3 are being recruited.</p> <p>The end-of-year meeting for all programme reps will take place at 5pm, on 3rd June 2019.</p>	JR
	End of meeting: 16:45	