

## Minutes: Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

### Languages for All

Monday 26 November 2018



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Centre for Open Learning

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Present:	Jeannette Rissmann	Language Programme Co-ordinator, LfA SSLC Director
	Rowan Murray	COL Director of Quality
	Ivan Sun	Programme Representative- Beginner
	Gina Everson	Programme Representative- Elementary
	Jill Nelson	Programme Representative- Advanced

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Start time: 14:30

End Time: 15.45

1.	Welcome/ Agenda	
	JR opened the meeting and introductions were made.  As this was the first LFA SSLC there were no previous minutes and matters arising to discuss.	JR
2.	Updates on developments in LFA	
	JR explained that LFA is waiting for the new appointment of a Head of Languages. Despite the transition, Language Programme Co-ordinators are working hard to keep courses running effectively.	JR
3.	Programme representative Remit	
	JR handed out a condensed overview of the programme representative remit and clarified the responsibilities of the representatives. This means identifying whether student feedback was the responsibility of the programme representative or whether it is feedback that should be sent to a different forum (e.g. complaints, course level changes, student support).	JR
4.	Programme Representative Items	
	It was acknowledged that there are areas to improve in running the LFA SSLC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IS, GE and JN stated that it would be beneficial to have the feedback forum open for longer. There was a very limited amount of time for the representatives to collect feedback</li><li>• JN reported that students felt the programme reps were not visible enough and that photos, mention of classes that representatives attend and email addresses would help promote the representatives and their roles.</li></ul>	IS, GE, JN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The webpage with COL/ LFA student representative details is difficult to find/not available.</li> </ul> <p>JR and RM acknowledged that the window for providing feedback was too short and that representative information was not easy to find. JR and RM will look into this alongside the Communications team.</p> <p>RM explained the plan to have a noticeboard that would provide programme representative details. This needs to be planned alongside the recently updated General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy to ensure that data privacy regulations are being followed. RM to check data privacy and obtain permission to share representative photographs on the upcoming noticeboard.</p> <p>RM further explained that there is a Programme Representative review planned for Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December where issues that have occurred will be identified and the system will hopefully be refined and improved. Feedback mechanisms and visibility will be on the agenda.</p>	
5.	Student Items	
	<p><u>5.1 Teaching methodology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IS and GE raised concerns that at the Beginner and Elementary level, it would be useful to have a grammar explanation in English as well as the target language. Currently, both are struggling to understand the finer details of grammar explanations in the target language.</li> </ul> <p>JR clarified that language courses in LFA are designed to use as much of the target language as possible, according to the level of the students. JR will discuss this concern with other Language Programme Co-ordinators and then feed back to the LFA Representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JN noted feedback requesting more grammar be discussed in Advanced level language classes rather than a focus on communication.</li> </ul> <p>JR explained that it is stated in all course description that language courses at LFA are communicative and that Advanced level courses do not focus on grammar. While nuances of specific grammar points may be covered, communicative activities are the basis of the syllabus. The course descriptions will be reviewed to ensure that the language teaching methodology is clear to prospective students.</p> <p><u>5.2 Rooms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IS, GE and JN reported that some allocated classrooms are not a suitable size and that students report issues with insufficient space, noise problems (e.g. when tutor in the classroom next door plays a video or audio exercise, the use of G1 for Ceilidhs) and classroom changes</li> </ul>	IS, GE, JN

JR explained the room booking system used at COL: LFA sends a spreadsheet of desired room space to COL's Rooming team who, in turn, sends this to a University of Edinburgh Central Booking System. LFA are then allocated rooms in the Holyrood Campus based on the capacity requested. It is, unfortunately, very challenging to book alternative rooms.

RM explained that teaching space is currently being discussed in the College and University and that rooming issues are evident across every School in the University.

RM and JR attended a University Learning and Teaching Spaces Strategy Workshop today, where teaching space was discussed. However, changes are unlikely to be immediate and this is part of a longer-term strategy to improve learning and teaching space across the University.

### 5.3 Course books

- GE raised the issue that it was difficult to obtain course books due to limited stock at Blackwell's. This resulted in students sharing books and having to search for course books from alternative suppliers.

JR explained that we use Blackwell's as it is affiliated with the University of Edinburgh. In the current system, LFA sends a list of course books to Blackwell's every August, as requested by the store. However, many international publishers are closed during August and this can cause delay in supply. In 2019, LFA will propose to send their request list to Blackwell's earlier to overcome this, but cannot guarantee that Blackwell's will have sufficient storage space.

### 5.4 Class times

- JN reported a request for alternative class times, preferably earlier than the 6.30-8.20pm slot.

JR explained that we are unable to change class times, i.e. starting at 6pm instead of 6.30pm. We can only run classes with a minimum number of enrolments, if there are too few enrolments for daytime classes, these will be cancelled. Being limited to evening classes can be more problematic for lesser-taught languages as there is less demand for classes during the day. JR explained that all tutors adapt their teaching to the needs of individual courses/groups but will speak to tutors again about planning energising activities or planning class breaks to overcome tiredness in evening classes.

### 5.5 Library/ Resources/ Wiki access

- LFA students cannot access the University of Edinburgh Virtual Learning Environment, Learn. (most LFA courses currently use wikis which are in many respects similar to Learn but do not allow access to Library resources)
- A small number of students have been unable to access their course wiki space or have had difficulties accessing it.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As LFA students are not matriculated in to the university and do not have student numbers or student cards, they are unable to access the University Library. GE pointed out that the Open University allows students to access online resources.</li> </ul> <p>JR acknowledged these points and confirmed that LFA are currently limited to using the wiki spaces and that Library access is not available. JR explained that Short Courses are in the process of moving courses onto Learn (The University of Edinburgh Virtual Learning Environment) and, with luck, this may be extended to LFA.</p> <p>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.</p>	
6	Course Enhancement Questionnaires/ Mid-course feedback	
	<p>The mid-course feedback postcards were mentioned by JR. This is a new method of obtaining feedback for LFA originally introduced by and for Short Courses, and it was not used consistently across classes as no discussion has taken place or decision been made. JR to discuss possible programme-wide implementation with Language Programme Co-ordinators.</p> <p>JR presented the SSLC with copies of the end of course questionnaires and explained the rationale behind questions. The first 12 questions are set by the University of Edinburgh, then there is a COL question and 4 LFA programme specific questions. It was acknowledged that there can be feedback fatigue, particularly for returning students who have been attending classes for many years, but the questionnaires are an important method for gaining data on the quality of our provision.</p>	JR
7	Any Other Business	
	<p>The Representatives were thanked for their time and efforts and were encouraged to continue with the role next term and encourage other students to apply for the role, particularly in non-represented levels.</p> <p>The date for the next recruitment round is yet to be confirmed. A decision will be made at the Programme Representative/ SSLC review on the 4<sup>th</sup> December.</p>	
8	Date of next meeting	
	The next Student Staff Liaison Committee will take place in Term 2- date to be confirmed by the Academic Liaison for LFA	