

The University of Edinburgh
The Moray House School of Education
School Postgraduate Studies Committee

Minute of the meeting held at 9.30am on 4 May 2016 in Room 1.19 Paterson's Land

Present: Dr P Allison (Convener), Ms S Colegrove, Dr H Christie, Mr R Easton, Dr R Ewins, Dr A Irvine, Dr M Jess, Dr J Li, Ms R O'Neill, Dr G Reid, Ms R Rennie, Dr C Rosenhan, Dr S Psycharakis, Dr J Telford, Ms W Timmons, Dr T Turner, Ms K Woomble, Mr P Udofia and Dr C Valentin.

In attendance Ms L Rowand, Mrs D Scott

Apologies Dr S Beames, Dr E Boeren, Ms S Chapman, Dr E Christie, Ms R Cowie, Dr A Emejulu, Dr S Fawcner, Dr D Fry, Ms N Gilbert, Dr M McDowell, Dr A Macpherson, Dr A Niven, Dr G Robinson, Dr P Sangster, Dr C Sinclair and Dr D Torrance

1. Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were as noted above. The Convener thanked Dr Psycharakis and Dr Valentin for convening the meeting which had taken place on 17 March 2016.

2. Minute of the meeting held on 9 February 2016

The minute of the meeting was approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising (not considered elsewhere on the agenda)

3.1 University Programme and Course Handbook Policy (item 3.1 refers)

The Convener had spoken to the Convener of the Board of Studies regarding this matter. The University policy required that an appropriate approvals process for handbooks was implemented in each School. This was to ensure accuracy of information and to ensure that all handbooks were approved prior to the commencement of a course or programme. As yet there had been no progress in producing guidance on how this would be implemented within the School of Education. It was agreed that it would be prudent for programme directors to exchange handbooks to scrutinise until there was further guidance available on how this should be done within the School. The University's policy was available at:

http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Prog_Course_Handbooks.pdf

[Action: Convener to follow up with Convener of Board of Studies]

3.2 Changes to assessment arrangements for course relating to visual impairment and deafness (item 3.8 refers)

Student Systems had advised that EUCLID was able to store marks for a first sit and subsequent resits. This paper should now be forwarded to the Board of Studies for approval.

[Action: Programme Director to forward amended paper to secretary for forwarding to Board of Studies]

3.3 Dissertation writing course for PGT students (item 4.2 refers)

This course was now going ahead and administrative support had been provided by Siobhan Byron, Engagement Assistant. Members of SPGSC agreed that they would like to pass on the committee's thanks to Cathy Benson and the English Language Teaching Centre for their collaboration and provision of this useful course. **[Action: Convener to contact Cathy Benson on behalf of SPGSC]**

3.4 Special Circumstances and MSc Scholarships committees (item 4.4 and 4.5 refer)

The Convener thanked John Telford and Claudia Rosenhan who had joined the Special Circumstances Committee. SPGSC also thanked Pete Evans and Hamish Macleod who had demitted office from the Special Circumstances Committee.

The Convener also thanked Claire Valentin, Rory Ewins, Aileen Irvine, John Telford, James MacAllister, Jingyi Li and Claudia Rosenhan who had agreed to be part of the committee considering MSc Scholarship applications.

3.5 Assessment Innovations (item 5.2 refers)

It was hoped that Dr Fyfe would be able to deliver a session on the use of padlet wall as an assessment tool after the Youth Studies course had been delivered and assessed. Introductory videos about padlet wall could be found on youtube and other websites.

3.6 Ethics Forms and processes (item 5.5 refers)

The Depute Director of the Graduate School (PGT) would contact Professor Bayne and Dr Brown to agree appropriate wording to include in the PGT generic handbook/dissertation handbook explaining the ethics review process. This could also be included in PGR guidance. **[Action: CV to liaise with Professor Bayne and Dr Brown]**

3.7 SAMO matters (item 5.6 refers)

Initial indications suggested that the College would be very supportive of the School's proposals to use Turnitin at various points during a PGR student's period of study. The Depute Director (PGR) would report further on this matter at a future meeting of SPGSC. **[Action: Depute Director (PGR) to work further with SAMO and CAMO to put in place guidance for the use of Turnitin with PGR student's work]**

4. **Convener's Business**

4.1 Newsletter and other Conversion activities

The School Marketing Officer tabled an exemplar digital newsletter. This newsletter was aimed at offer holders. It was acknowledged that some programmes would prefer to use their own or an adapted version of the newsletter or opt out of its use altogether. Some programme teams planned to follow it up with another more programme specific at a later date. The College Admissions team had agreed to supply Communications and Marketing with email addresses for all offer holders. It was acknowledged that students who applied through an agent were unlikely to have the newsletter forwarded on to them by the agent. The newsletter was mobile optimised as the majority of recipients will look at it on a phone or tablet. Articles were short and usually linked to the School website. In future years, this newsletter would be produced at an earlier stage in the year.

Members suggested the following additions to the content of the newsletter:

- It would be helpful to mention the personal tutoring system so that students had some knowledge of it before they arrived at the University.
- Accessibility and disability support should be flagged in the newsletter. Currently students tend to wait until they arrive at the University before contacting the Student Disability Office and much support could be put in advance in that office had prior notification of students' needs.

It was also noted that the current cohort of students had suggested that they would have liked a method of communicating with each other prior to their arrival at the University. Establishing a social media site could be problematic in terms of monitoring and given that different nationalities had preferred sites. However, other schools had overcome this problem and managed to run successful sites or chatrooms. The MSc Outdoor Education suite of programmes had a Facebook page which had been set up by the programme team but which was never accessed by staff and was entirely for the students' use. Students had reported that it was particularly useful for different cohorts of students to get in touch with each other. It was noted that EUSA ran a forum which some students had found useful prior to their arrival in Edinburgh.

Employing a native mandarin speaker to help with conversion activities and also to support current students had also been discussed in the past, and the committee agreed that this input could be very helpful. However, it was important to not become too focussed on the students from one country.

It was noted that students on the course Online Language Learning created an online page for new students coming to Edinburgh as part of their coursework. Some of those pages could be adapted and posted on a site made available to incoming students.

SPGSC agreed that the existing Admissions Short Life Working Group should consider the above suggestions and any other ideas for how to improve conversion activities within the School. A proposal for these activities should be presented to SPGSC as soon as possible. **[Action: CV and SLWG on Admissions to take forward]**

4.2 College Postgraduate Office Update

As a result of a recommendation arising from the review undertaken last year by an external consultant, the College Postgraduate Office was being reorganised into two teams. Currently support was given on a School basis but in future there would be one team led by Kirsty Woomble dealing with on programme matters and a second team led by Anne Fernon dealing with admissions. Each school would have a named person or persons in both teams with whom to liaise directly regarding their programmes. There would be a communication from the College soon announcing when the change to the new teams would take place.

4.3 Consultation on proposed change to the academic year

The deadline for responding to the consultation paper had been 3 May 2016. A number of meetings regarding the proposal were to be held later in the month:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/2016/review-of-the-academic-year-consultation> and it might still be possible to contribute to the discussions through these or by later submissions. A number of members of SPGSC were concerned that if the proposal was implemented it would have a disruptive effect on teaching and learning, would necessitate a later submission date for dissertations and also hinder any attempts by students to undertake research work in local schools.

4.4 Guest speaker: Professor Scott Wurdinger

Professor Wurdinger, professor of experiential education and leadership studies at Minnesota State University in Mankato was to be visiting the Graduate School on 12 May and would

deliver lectures to staff and students on the theme “Making higher education meaningful: Research and practice in experiential learning.” The lectures will explore ways in which experiential learning can be used to enhance teaching and learning in higher education.

4.5 Welcome Events

The central University Induction Team had requested that all Welcome events be entered into the Welcome Week Timetable by Friday, 15th July. This was much earlier than information had been requested in previous years. The Induction team had reported that feedback from students on how to improve the University’s Welcome App and online events information was that all information and events should be available from an early stage. This would make the app a “one stop shop” for new students to find events.

4.6 Timetabling

Programme secretaries and programme directors were currently preparing information to be submitted to the timetabling unit in regard to timetabling needs in 2016/17. This information had to be submitted by 27 May. Information on non-teaching events had also been requested and the Graduate School Administrative Assistant was currently collating this. The School’s main timetabling contact, Euan Henderson would be leaving the University by or before September. There were concerns that the School would then be without a dedicated contact who was familiar with the Holyrood estate. **[Action: Convener to raise concerns about room booking and the need for a dedicated point of contact with School Executive]**

4.7 Publication of entry requirements

SPGSC noted that the University’s postgraduate entry requirements would now be published in the print prospectus brochures and degree finder for the next two admissions cycles. Therefore for 2017/18 marketing materials, programme teams must agree the entry requirements for 2017/18 and 2018/19 intakes.

4.8 Summer Graduation: 1 July 2016

The Graduate School would host a graduation celebration on the afternoon of 1 July 2016 as in previous years.

[Secretary’s note: Subsequent to the meeting, it was decided by the Head of School that an event for all new graduates of the School of Education would be held on 1 July. The Graduate School and Undergraduate Office were asked to work together to plan this event.]

4.9 Electronic Submission

The College project on investigating electronic submission was continuing. Within the Graduate School it was the expectation that all submissions should be made electronically and that there should be no submission of hard copy assignments. Graduate School Office staff should not be requested to print out assignments. Marking and feedback should also be done online.

A number of members of SPGSC raised health and accessibility concerns regarding the expectation that these activities be undertaken electronically. **[Action: Convener to ensure these concerns are communicated to the College team investigating electronic submission]**

4.10 Programme Reviews

The programme review of MSc Education, including proposed pathways to replace the existing PgCert 3-14 Physical Education and MSc Community Education, had taken place on

26 April. The Convener thanked the programme team for preparing the review submission and those colleagues who had formed part of the review panel.

The review of Pg Certificate in Academic Practice was to take place on 11 May 2016. The review of MSc Outdoor Education/MSc Outdoor Environmental and Sustainability Education would take place at the end of June 2016. The review of MSc Digital Education would take place in September 2016.

4.11 Assessment and Progression Tools

The introduction of this system meant that Schools would have responsibility for inputting marks directly into EUCLID from September 2016.

4.12 Student Awards

The School of Veterinary Studies had introduced a student awards system to recognise student citizenship. A nomination form was circulated amongst staff at the same time as the EUSA teaching awards for staff to nominate students for the awards. Nominations were then considered and approved by the student support management group. The award was normally a £50 voucher and a certificate. A prize giving ceremony was held prior to the Graduation ceremony. Student and staff response to this innovation within the School of Veterinary Medicine had been very positive. SPGSC agreed that it would like to investigate whether a similar scheme could be introduced in the School of Education. Rachel O'Neill and Richard Easton volunteered to give further consideration to this initiative and develop a proposal for SPGSC to consider. **[Action: Rachel O'Neill and Richard Easton]**

5. **Path: Presentation by Student Systems**

Colin Hunter, Business Support Manager, Student Systems attended the meeting to demonstrate "Path". Path is a course selection and programme building tool originally developed for the School of Mathematics, now also available across the University. In many respects it was essentially the DRPS presented in a far more modern and user friendly format. The information in it is drawn from EUCLID and therefore relies on EUCLID information being accurate and updated. Path is available to staff and students as a channel on MyEd. Information on it was now included as part of the University's "Welcome" and applicants who had a user and password were able to access it. There were proposals to open its availability further so that potential applicants could also make use of it. Records showed that 816 students within the School of Education had been into the system. Students could not enrol on courses through Path but it showed which courses it might be possible to take and highlighted potential timetable clashes. Certain additional features could be activated by Schools e.g. it was possible to include a list of options taken by students on a particular programme in previous years. Other Schools had suggested that it would help with planning if the functionality was extended to allow students to register an interest in taking a course ahead of the start of semester.

It was agreed that all programme directors should check Path to ensure that the information is correct in respect of their programme. **[Action: All programme directors]**. The Graduate School Administrator should be registered as a Path administrator. **[Action: Secretary]**

SPGSC thanked Colin Hunter for the presentation which had been extremely useful in demonstrating Path's attributes and how its use was becoming increasingly common within the University.

6. **Applications update**

The College Postgraduate Administrator reported on the overall picture of applications for postgraduate programmes within the School. Many of the offers were conditional and could

not be turned into unconditional offers until undergraduate results were available towards the end of June/beginning of July. The conversion rate for offers to actual matriculated students varied quite considerably between different programmes. A decision had been taken to close applications for most programmes in July. Few applications were received after this time and overseas students who required a visa would not have sufficient time to obtain one if they had not applied by this point. The new MSc Inclusive Education would remain open as this programme had only relatively recently been able to start accepting applications.

7. Short Life Working Groups

7.1 Report of the Short Life Working Group on English entry requirements and application closing dates for the Graduate School of Education and Sport

This report had been amended following discussions at the last meeting of SPGSC. However, a number of members of the committee were reluctant to change entry requirements as proposed in the report. After further discussion, it was proposed that entry requirements remain as at present with the exception of increasing entry for MSc Digital Education so that it required:

IELTS 7 with 6.5 for writing and 6 on other skills

TOEFL 100 with 23 for writing and 20 for other skills

This would bring MSc Digital Education into line with MSc Outdoor Education/Outdoor Environmental and Sustainability Education, MSc Learning for Sustainability and MSc Community Education and mean that there were only 3 different categories of entry requirement for study in the Graduate School of Education and Sport. **[Action: Rachel O'Neill and Rory Ewins to discuss this amendment to the proposal with Ken Fordyce]**

It was noted that any amendment to the entry requirements could not now be introduced until 2018/19. The proposal would also have to be approved at Board of Studies.

7.2 Report of the Short Life Working Group on admissions processes and Welcome/Induction

This report had been circulated as a late paper and consequently did not appear on the agenda.

The Short Life Working Group had been set up to consider the following:

1. Review the School pre-sessional web site and how it integrated with central resources, and student perspectives. Consider how to direct applicants to it prior to arrival to maximise preparation for arriving and thriving in studies and more generally settling into Edinburgh.
2. Tasks and roles pertaining to admission and welcome, from initial application, through welcome week, through semester one. Creation of a flow diagram which could be circulated to staff and students
3. School and programme events during welcome week – review and consider how maximal benefit and efficiency can be ensured.
4. How to do well in your masters, September to July cycle. How to increase participation and reduce need for ongoing programme level duplication.

The student representative who had attended one meeting had commented on the overwhelming amount of information that was given to students at the start of their studies. Many students would prefer to arrive earlier and have time to settle in before their studies commenced but often student accommodation was not available until the start of the academic year.

SPGSC considered that the prompt allocation of personal tutors could help mitigate many of the problems that students faced in the first few weeks of their study at the University. It was discussed whether it was possible for personal tutors to hold group meetings during induction

week. It was thought this might have many benefits. It was suggested that initial PT allocations be made when students received an offer from the School. The Senior Personal Tutor had asked Heads of Institute to give him the names of PTs earlier in the year to try to implement this. Some adjustment would be required once students had matriculated as inevitably some PTs would end up with more tutees than others. **[Action: Senior Personal Tutor to discuss possible introduction of school wide requirement to hold group meetings with tutees during Induction week with Undergraduate Senior Personal Tutor, Heads of Institute, and College Dean of Students]**

It was also agreed that the following be undertaken:

1. **Update the Welcome website at www.morayhouse.ed.ac.uk/welcome/**
2. **All staff to view central welcome website: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students>**
3. **A flowchart of admissions processes and responsibilities should be drafted and checked with the College Postgraduate Office.**
4. **Discuss with International Office the information it sends to students and what other information might be available.**
5. **Pre sessional web site to be changed to 'welcome site' and updated. The site should state 'key information' as 'topics' was confusing. There should be photos of administrative staff on the site as well as academic staff. The College Marketing Officer had reviewed the site and provided a list of suggestions and changes. Steps should be taken to ensure that prospective students are given the link to the site by coordinating with the admissions team.**

[Action: Depute Director PGT].

All other comments or suggestions for improvements to admissions processes, welcome and induction week to be forwarded to the Convener of the working group. **[Action: All]**

8. Accessibility Matters

The committee considered two papers prepared by the School Academic Coordinator for Accessibility. The first of these considered the comments on accessibility made by course organisers in the annual course reports. Although obtaining comments this way had worked reasonably well, the format of the course reports was to be simplified and this was likely to mean it would be harder in future to extract information on accessibility. In many respects, face to face meetings were the most effective mechanism for finding out more about accessibility issues.

SPGSC discussed how course organisers satisfied the requirement to make reading lists available four weeks in advance of the start of a course. This was something that students often requested before commencing their programme of study at the University. It was possible that they might be able to access Talis to obtain reading materials. **[Action: School Academic Coordinator for Accessibility to contact course organisers within the Graduate School to ask how they currently manage this requirement and to investigate the availability of Talis to offer holders with the Library.]**

Members of SPGSC were concerned that apparently the University did not include the subtitling of podcasts/videos or the provision of transcripts within its mainstream adjustments list. These adjustments were not included on the schedule of adjustments for any students, including deaf students. **[Action: School Academic Coordinator for Accessibility to check with the Student Disability Office that the policy had not changed]**

SPGSC also noted the paper outlining the roles and responsibilities relating to accessibility for staff within the Moray House School of Education. The paper included a flowchart illustrating how the system of disclosing learning profile adjustments should be implemented within the School.

Any colleague who had questions or concerns regarding accessibility issues should contact the School Academic Coordinator for Accessibility via CoA@ed.ac.uk.

9. AOCB

9.1 Convener's last meeting

The committee noted that this was the Convener's last meeting prior to his departure to a new post at Penn State University. It thanked him for his hard work as Convener of SPGSC and as Postgraduate Director of the Graduate School and Depute Director prior to that. The committee wished him well for the future.

CLOSED BUSINESS

9. External Examiner appointments

10.1 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for MSc Performance Psychology

The committee homologated the appointment of Dr Samuel Vine, University of Exeter as external examiner for the above programme. The appointment had already been approved by the College Postgraduate Office. **[Action: Secretary to forward appointment letter]**

10.2 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for Master of Teaching, MEd Leadership and Management and proposed MEd Leadership and Learning

The committee homologated the appointment of Professor Ciaran Sugrue, University College Dublin as external examiner for the above programmes. The appointment had already been approved by the College Postgraduate Office. **[Action: Secretary to forward appointment letter]**

10.3 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for Pg Certificate 3-14 Physical Education

The committee approved the appointment of Dr Maura Coulter, Dublin City University as external examiner for the above programme. **[Action: Secretary to forward to College Office for approval]**

10.4 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for Sports Coaching courses

The committee approved the appointment of Dr Mike Waring, Loughborough University as external examiner for the above courses. SPGSC noted that Dr Waring was already appointed as the external examiner for the Graduate School's research courses and this application extended his responsibility to cover two sports coaching courses. **[Action: Secretary to forward to College Office for approval]**

Ms Lesley Rowand
Secretary, School Postgraduate Studies Committee