

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

Minute of the meeting held at 2pm on 17 November 2015 in Room 5.04 Charteris Land

Present: Dr P Allison (Convener), Dr S Beames, Dr E Boeren, Ms M Carilo, Ms S Chapman, Dr E Christie, Dr H Christie, Mr R Easton Dr R Ewins, Dr S Fawkner, Dr J Li, Dr M McDowell, Dr S Psycharakis, Ms R O'Neill, Dr G Robinson, Dr C Rosenhan, Dr C Sinclair, Mr G Thomson, Dr D Torrance, Dr T Turner and Dr C Valentin.

In attendance Ms S Agnew, Ms S Colegrove, Ms N Gilbert, Ms L Rowand, Mrs D Scott, Ms H Stringer, Ms A M O'Mullane,

Apologies Dr J Crowther, Dr P Evans, Professor L Florian, Dr A Irvine, Dr A Niven, Dr A Irvine, Dr A Macpherson, Dr G Reid, Ms R Rennie, Dr J Telford, Ms W Timmons, Mr P Udofia, Ms K Woomble

1. Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed all to the meeting, and in particular welcomed the student representatives who were attending SPGSC for the first time. Apologies were as noted above.

2. Minute of the meeting held on 17 September 2015

The minute was approved as an accurate record subject to a number of minor amendments on the attendance list.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 New course proposal guidelines (item 3.4 refers)

The Convener, Depute Director of the Graduate School (PGT), School Director of Quality Assurance and the secretary to the Board of Studies were to be meeting to discuss this further to ensure a consistent approach to the documentation required for new courses. A report would be made to a future meeting of the committee. **[Action: Convener and Director of QA]**

3.2 University Programme and Course Handbook Policy (item 3.7 refers)

The Convener would raise this matter again with the School Director of Teaching and Learning. **[Action: Convener]**

3.3 Assessment and Feedback turnaround times (item 3.8 refers)

Although a number of courses had been given dispensation from the 15 day requirement for assessment and feedback for academic year 2015/16, this would not be repeated in future years. Therefore the Convener encouraged colleagues to discuss with Heads of Institute/Depute Heads of Institute how staffing might be organised/reorganised in order that the 15 day requirement could be met next academic year.

The course team for REDU11046 (The sources of knowledge: Understanding and analysing research literature) managed to return marks and feedback to students in just over 15 days. Taking the need to schedule moderation meetings prior to the release of marks, markers had 10-11 days in which to mark. Marking of each assessment was assigned 1.5 hours on the workload model. Some tutors were double loaded and marked scripts for two seminar groups which resulted in them marking 50 scripts. This equated to 75 hours work, which was equal to these tutors spending an entire two weeks of worktime on this task alone.

It was also noted that advice given at College level meetings suggested that feedback did not need to be given with the final mark for the assignment. Feedback could be given to groups rather than on an individual basis and might be given before marks are received. The overriding factor was that feedback should be prompt.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to compile an analysis of the turnaround of assessments and feedback times in semester 1. Dr Ewins agreed to coordinate this. All programme directors were requested to forward comments to Dr Ewins on how course teams had coped with the challenge of the 15 day turnaround time. The report could then be considered by both SPGSC and SQAEC. **[Action: All programme directors to feedback comments on assessment turnaround and feedback times to Dr Ewins. Report to be discussed at future meeting of SPGSC].**

3.4 Improving SPGSC meetings (item 4.1 refers)

Views on how to improve SPGSC meetings should be forwarded to the Depute Director of the Graduate School (PGT). A paper revising membership of the committee would be presented to the next meeting of SPGSC. **[Action: Convener/Secretary]**

3.5 Quality and Enhancement matters

The Convener thanked the Director of Quality Assurance for all the work undertaken to appoint and brief PGR and PGT student representatives. This had been done at course, programme and committee level. It was hoped that the new PGT representatives for SPGSC would be able to attend the next meeting of the committee.

4. **Convener's Business**

4.1 Marketing and Webpages

The School Marketing Officer had been reviewing the School's website and realised that many of the programme pages required some updating or adjustment. In particular, several of the pages had a diagram illustrating how students could progress through the programme. Unfortunately these diagrams could not be read in the new website system and therefore needed to be removed quite urgently. As most programmes had recently checked the content of the structure section contained on the degree finder, it was recommended that this content be copied over to the School website. **[Action: School Marketing Officer to liaise with programme directors and School Web Developer]**

Members of SPGSC were reminded of the importance of ensuring information on the website is accurate, especially in light of the Competition and Marketing Authority's recently published advice for higher education providers **[Action: Programme Directors]**.

4.2 Teaching on Wednesday afternoons and evenings

EUSA had raised the matter of teaching on Wednesday afternoons on behalf of some students on the MSc Education programme. The programme director had responded to this

thoroughly. However, programme directors were reminded that if teaching was scheduled to take place on Wednesday afternoons and/or evenings, this should be stated explicitly on the programme's webpages. **[Action: Programme directors]**

4.3 Postgraduate Strategy

The Convener would be running a number of "townhall events" in early 2016 to facilitate discussion about the general direction of development of the Graduate School. Dates for these events would be circulated shortly.

4.4 Induction reviews – PGT and PGR

A short life working group was to be established to review the Graduate School's current approach to PGT induction. It was hoped to garner a wide range of views from both staff and students. It would be particularly useful to ask students to reflect back on their induction experience after they had been on programme for several months. It was also recognised that the pre-sessional website needed review. **[Action: Any comments from members of the committee on PGT induction to be forwarded directly to Depute Director PGT]**

The Depute Director (PGR) would also seek the views of PGR students who had recently experienced induction. Initial feedback had been positive and they had especially enjoyed the input from existing students.

4.5 Graduation 28 November 2015

The Graduation ceremony was taking place at the Usher Hall at 3pm on Friday 27 November. The Graduate School Office had arranged buses to transport guests to the Graduation celebration event which was taking place in G1, Paterson's Land from 4.30pm – 6.30pm. All staff, graduating students and their guests were welcome to attend the event.

4.6 Graduate School Ceilidh

The annual ceilidh would take place on Thursday 28 January in G1, Paterson's Land. Tickets would be on sale in the New Year. Committee members were requested to support this event.

4.7 "How to do well in your Masters" lecture series

Semester 1 lectures within this series were broadly an extension of the induction process and helped students settle into their studies. The lectures in semester 2 would support planning and research for the dissertation. However, there was still scope for further enriching the lecture series both this year and in future years. For instance it might be possible to draw on the expertise of visiting academics who were at the school to discuss their research with colleagues or examine a PGR student. Any colleagues who had an idea for a speaker or another way in which the lecture series could be enhanced should contact the Convener or the Graduate School Office. **[Action: All]**

4.8 PTES/PRES

The PTES and PRES outcomes for the School were tabled together with the School's response which had been submitted to the College Office. Comments on the surveys or the response could be forwarded to the Convener.

4.9 Graduate School External Examiners Expenses Policy

The policy was tabled and would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting and placed on the Graduate School's intranet site. The policy would also be circulated to all external examiners. It was hoped that having such a policy in place would clarify and standardise the Graduate School's approach to a number of matters, for instance reasonable expenses for a viva dinner or subsistence costs that may be claimed by an external examiner. **[Action: Secretary to circulate and post on intranet]**

4.10 Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) and UK Council for Graduate Education

Both these organisations ran a series of seminars and events covering a wide range of aspects of PGT and PGR education. If members of the committee wished to attend any of these events, these should contact the Convener or the Graduate School Office.

4.11 Graduate School Book Purchasing Policy

In previous years the Graduate School had financed the purchase of books for a number of staff teaching on some courses. This was not an appropriate use of the Graduate School's budget and it was not the Graduate School's function to act as a library or distribution centre. Course organisers should liaise with the Academic Support Librarian to ensure there is an adequate supply of books within the Library. If there was a shortfall, the Graduate School may purchase more books to supplement the Library's stock, but it would not buy books to be distributed to staff. Programme directors were requested to communicate this to all course organisers. **[Action: Programme directors]**

4.12 Postgraduate Open Day

The committee was reminded that the University's Postgraduate Open Day would take place on Wednesday 18 November and all were invited to attend and support this important event.

5. **External Examiners Reporting System (EERS)**

SPGSC welcomed Anne Marie O'Mullane, Academic Services to the meeting. Ms O'Mullane explained the motivating factors behind the development of the EERS and what it was hoped to achieve through its introduction. Essentially it should enable the University to make better use of the information that is collected through external examiners' reports. The EERS will mean that all data drawn from both the external examiners' reports and the responses to those reports will be centrally available. Previously reports were analysed at a School level, School reports forwarded to College level and a College report produced for discussion at University level and consequently much of the fine detail was lost in this process.

In addition, the University's policy for external examiners had been revised and a handbook for external examiners introduced.

It was noted that to date the School of Education had received 11 of its external examiners reports and four of these had also had responses submitted by the relevant academic coordinator. There were 13 reports outstanding and due to be submitted by 30 November 2015.

The slides for the presentation would be circulated with the minute of the meeting. **[Action: Secretary to circulate]**

6. Programme Matters

6.1 Revisions to MSc Learning for Sustainability Degree Programme Table

This paper requested that the DPT for the MSc/PGDip in Learning for Sustainability be changed to allow students the option to select a 20 credit course from another postgraduate programme. This would increase flexibility across the programme and encourage students to enrich their own curriculum, suited to their own career trajectory and aspirations.

SPGSC suggested that the amendment read “Students can request to gain 20 of their required credits via successful completion of another *course or courses* offered on another MSc programme anywhere in the University at level 10 or 11.” This would allow students to take 2 x 10 credit courses as well as one 20 credit course.

At present it was at the programme director’s discretion which course could be replaced by another from a different programme. SPGSC recommended that the DPT be amended to list those courses belonging to the programme which should be deemed compulsory for MSc Learning for Sustainability and which therefore could not be replaced.

The paper was approved for forwarding to the Board of Studies, subject to the above amendments. **[Action: Convener/Secretary/Programme Director]**

6.2 Revisions to MSc Inclusive and Special Education Degree Programme Table

SPGSC homologated this paper which had been approved by Convener’s Action. The paper had proposed a change to the existing DPT of MSc Inclusive and Special Education to bring the course list up to date and add flexibility to the selection of optional courses within the programme.

6.3 Revised Assessment for Social Theory and Outdoor Education (EDUA11304)

SPGSC welcomed this paper which proposed changing the course assessment from one 4000 word essay to one 3200 word essay (worth 80%) plus a three minute audio podcast (worth 20%). It was noted that initially at least podcasts would be double marked. SPGSC advised that the course organiser should liaise with the School Accessibility Coordinator for advice on how to deal with issues of accessibility in relation to this new type of assessment. Subject to this, SPGSC approved the change to the assessment. **[Action: Subject to the inclusion of information on accessibility matters, the paper be forwarded to the Board of Studies for approval]**

6.4 Validation of MEd Leadership and Learning

Following consideration of the paperwork for this proposal by a validation panel on 29 September 2015, the programme team had responded to the conditions and recommendations raised by the panel. These responses had been further considered by the members of the validation panel and a number of concerns remained. The validation panel was in the process of feeding these back to the programme team and until these had been addressed, it would not be possible for SPGSC to approve the programme for forwarding to the Board of Studies for further approval.

Members of the committee also asked about the unusual structure of the programme and suggested an explanation for this be included in the opening pages of the proposal document. Similarly questions were raised about the use of the common marking scheme and how some assessment practices would be implemented.

The Convener thanked both the members of the validation panel and the programme team for the huge amount of work undertaken in preparing and reviewing this programme. It was agreed that the programme directors would address the outstanding issues raised by the validation panel. **[Action: The revised documentation be circulated to a sub-group of SPGSC for approval prior to forwarding to the meeting of the Board of Studies to be held on 13 January 2016.]**

7. Where do our graduates go? Destinations of Moray House MSc graduates. Current issues and developments update: Presentation by Careers Service

SPGSC welcomed Suzanne Agnew and Helen Stringer of the Careers Service to the meeting. They had been invited to discuss and promote the work of the Careers Service and how it could serve the postgraduate community at the School of Education. It was a well-resourced service and students should be encouraged to make the most of it. It was recognised that PG students' needs differed from those of UG students and there was advice specific to PG students on the Careers Service website. Two staff within the Careers Service team were PG specialists but all advisers were able to work with PG students. There were also staff who had an international focus and specialised in liaising with international employers and assisting international students.

Students could access the Careers Service and its facilities at any time during their studies and for two year after graduation. The Careers Service encouraged students to engage with the career planning process early on in their studies. Appointments with careers counsellors could be made at the Main Library or on the Holyrood campus. Skype appointments were also available. A careers adviser might work with a student on job applications, interview techniques, LinkedIn profiles etc. The aim was to help students market themselves and their qualifications so that they could most effectively describe their unique blend of knowledge, skills and experience. The Careers Service could also provide tailored group sessions. For example it had recently contributed to the professional skills course delivered on MSc Strength and Conditioning and MSc Performance Psychology.

The most recent Destinations survey was currently being finalised and would be forwarded to the School shortly. Prospective postgraduate students were increasingly seeking information on the career prospects of graduates of particular PGT/PGR programmes and were very interested in knowing where previous graduates had secured posts. Although useful, if there were only a small number of respondents, the information could be misleading. In the case of smaller programmes, programme directors were often the most useful source of information on where graduates had found relevant employment. It was suggested that the School Marketing Officer and Careers team discuss how best to present the destinations survey results to prospective students. **[Action: School Marketing Officer and Careers Service]**

It was noted that the Careers Service would be contributing to a PGR seminar later in the year. SPGSC suggested that it also might be helpful for some information about the Careers Service to appear in the School's doctoral newsletter. **[Action: PGR student representatives to liaise with newsletter team]**

Similarly, it would be useful to have input from the Careers Service at one of the How to do well in your Masters seminars in future years. **[Action: Depute Director of Graduate School (PGT) to liaise with Careers Service]**

The Careers Service could be followed on Twitter at @uofedcareers. The details of its other social media outlets could be found at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers/join-in>

8. Streamlining of examination boards

The paper suggested a streamlining of Boards of Examiners for the spring of 2016 onwards. At present the Graduate School ran approximately 15 different Board of Examiners' meetings twice a year. This was not efficient and it was therefore recommended that from 2016 onwards, Boards of Examiners meetings be combined as outlined in the paper. The memberships of the Boards of Examiners would not change and external examiner's responsibilities would also remain the same. Essentially, several boards would run one after another within the same meeting. It was hoped that this reorganisation would reduce the amount of time colleagues spent attending different Boards of Examiners meetings. One implication of this change was that some of the discussion which currently took place at the Boards of Examiners meeting, may take place at the pre-Board. There were also a number of boards which were held outwith the normal meeting period for Boards of Examiners. The timings for these would have to be reconsidered in order to fit with this reconfiguration.

It was agreed that meeting dates for joint Boards should be set and that the Convener should write to all external examiners advising them of this change. **[Action: Convener]**

9. Accessibility Matters

Discussion of this matter was postponed until the next meeting of SPGSC

10. Personal Tutor System

The Senior Personal Tutor for PGT students reported that the project which had managed the personal tutoring system at College level was now being devolved to Schools to manage. College would however continue to monitor the system.

He had been working with the Senior Personal Tutor for UG students to better define the Senior Personal Tutor role within the School. It was important to establish how to develop the personal tutoring system in a way that best suited the students within the School.

One of the principal parts of the system was that personal tutors set up and recorded all group and individual meetings on EUCLID. The Senior Personal Tutors were able to monitor this and at the moment this was not being done as routinely as it should be. If meetings were not recorded on EUCLID this led to the impression that personal tutors were not properly fulfilling their duties. It was further noted that PGT students were required to have a meeting with their personal tutor during the dissertation period.

It was noted that any member of staff was able to make a note on the student's EUCLID record. This was especially useful in regards to extensions and it was good practice for course organisers/programme directors to note on EUCLID if a student had been given an extension. The Senior Tutors would liaise on this and write to all personal tutors reminding them to record meetings and other relevant information on the Meetings/Notes tab within EUCLID. **[Action: Senior Personal Tutor PGT]**

11. Library Report

Member of SPGSC welcomed the report from Ms Nahad Gilbert, Academic Support Librarian. It was noted that 98% of the Library's budget for the School of Education had already been spent. Of the £190k budget, £124k had been used to pay for e-journals, £6k for print journals, £10k for combined print and e-journals, £33k on databases and £7.5k on books including e-books. From August 2016, funding would be allocated differently and it may be that some repeated subscriptions were questioned and not renewed if usage was low. Currently some journals had a cost per use as high as £2k. It was recognised that purchases

for smaller programmes were likely to have a higher cost per use. Some extra funds were about to be released by the Library for purchases this year. Heads of Institute had been contacted about this with a request for bids but no responses had yet been received.

Those colleagues who had used Talis Aspire to create and manage online reading lists, had found this an effective service which made it easier for Course Organisers to request core teaching materials from the Library. More information was available at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-teaching-staff/resource-lists/using-resource-lists>

Gavin McLachlan was now the Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University and was reviewing the Library's provision and support services. Surveys undertaken suggested that PGR students were more satisfied with the Library than PGT students. Students had requested that the Library on the Holyrood campus have longer opening hours. However, there was evidence to suggest that the demand for this was not to gain access to library resources but rather to have access to printing.

12. AOCB

12.1 Path

Path was a web based course selection tool, created by two staff members when they were Edinburgh undergraduates. The University website describes it as a "dynamic programme builder through which students campus wide can build timetables and check the compatibility of course choices." It was now part of Student Systems was regularly used many students. However, it had also caused confusion as some students have misunderstood its purpose and think that it is the way in which to enroll on option courses when in fact it simply enables students to see whether courses are compatible. The Convener agreed to investigate whether it would be possible to have a presentation on Path at a future meeting of SPGSC. **[Action: Convener]**

12.2 Course evaluation

The School's Director of Quality Assurance reported that at a recent College meeting, it had been stated that student feedback did not have to be obtained through the traditional method of asking students to complete a questionnaire. Other alternative methods could be used such as ring fencing time at the end of a class to ask students for their comments. The feedback would still have to be recorded and that feedback used to inform the course evaluation. Colleagues were invited to share this information with course organisers and were also invited to share any good practice in this area with SQAC and SPGSC. **[Action: Programme directors]**

CLOSED BUSINESS

13. External Examiner appointments

13.1 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for MSc Sport Policy, Management and International Development

The committee approved the appointment of Dr Paul Darby, University of Ulster as external examiner for the above programme. **[Action: Secretary to forward to College Office for approval]**

Ms Lesley Rowand
Secretary, School Postgraduate Studies Committee