

# Minutes: Staff Student Liaison Committee

## International Foundation Programme



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Centre for Open Learning

29<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Present:** Anya Clayworth (AC) Chair; Programme Director  
Kirsty Adamson (KA) Deputy Head of COL  
Corrine Song (CS) Programme Representative  
Yuqing Li (YL) Programme Representative  
Mariam MF Kh Khamis (MK) Programme Representative

**In Attendance:** Sasha Wood (SW) Teaching Office Administrator  
Kameliya Skerleva (KS) Programmes Administrator

**Start Time:** 13:00  
**End Time:** 13:42

1	Welcome / Agenda	AC		
	AC convened the meeting at 13:00. AC welcomed all present and thanked all for attending.			
2	Student Items			
	<p>The student representatives used a Microsoft Form to gather feedback from class mates and reported on the following Term 1 courses:</p> <p><b>2.1 Foundation English for Academic Purposes 1 Entry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Groups A students said that the teacher was kind and understanding</li><li>• Groups B students found the teacher kind, nice and patient</li><li>• Groups C students thought the teacher was kind, patient and speaks very clearly</li><li>• The course materials helped students with writing skills</li><li>• Students enjoyed the study atmosphere – the classes are very engaging, with interesting discussions every week</li><li>• Students would like to see more vocabulary and grammar practice</li></ul> <p><b>2.1 Foundation English for Academic Purposes 1 Plus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group A believed that the teacher was patient, passionate, helpful and interested in discussions</li><li>• The Group B thought that teacher is energetic</li><li>• It is hard to complete the vocabulary tests on time and students would like more practice tests</li><li>• Some students are confused about essay writing and find it hard to understand what the correct essay structure is</li><li>• Both Plus and Entry students believe that the classes are too long and tiring – 120 minutes without a break.</li></ul> <p>AC noted that more practice opportunities will be coming for students on Entry and Plus</p> <table><tr><td>Action:</td><td>AC to speak to tutors about the length of the class and the possibility to give students a break</td></tr></table>	Action:	AC to speak to tutors about the length of the class and the possibility to give students a break	CS
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<div><h3>2.3 Introduction to Psychology</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The tutor was very helpful and encouraging, good at explaining the subject matter and patient when answering student questions</li><li>• Students commented that sometimes the teacher spoke too fast</li><li>• Some students felt that the course was too dense: there are too many scientific terms and the articles feel too advanced. Students would like to see more examples in class, as some struggled to keep up.</li><li>• Many said that they like learning about theories in psychology and enjoyed the videos played in class. Students felt that, overall, it is a fascinating course.</li><li>• The quizzes are a bit difficult, students were unable to see the results and learn from them</li></ul><p>AC responded that students should ask the teacher to slow down if she is speaking too fast in class. Teachers on the IFP are used to this and will not mind slowing down.</p><p>AC reassured students that all articles and materials are appropriate to the level of the course. If students are unsure about any of the terms and concepts, they should ask the teacher to explain them.</p><p>KS confirmed that quiz results are available to students via MyGrades</p><table><tr><td>Action:</td><td>AC and KS to clarify how results can be accessed via Learn</td></tr></table></div>	Action:	AC and KS to clarify how results can be accessed via Learn	<div>MK</div>
Action:	AC and KS to clarify how results can be accessed via Learn		
<div><h3>2.4 Introduction to Social Science</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Both groups found the teacher interesting and professional, and always ready to help</li><li>• Interesting content and topics discussed every time</li><li>• Some students find it difficult to understand the main points and the course aims are not always clear. It will be useful if the teacher could highlight the main topics and learning objectives at the start of each class.</li><li>• Some students are confused about the Student Booklet and how to find certain resources</li></ul><p>AC explained that students can refer to the course aims available on Learn and noted that teachers should make sure that students are able to connect what is on the VLE with what is delivered during in-person teaching.</p><p>AC added that the Resource List on Learn should have all readings, and if something is not available, students should speak to the teacher.</p></div>	<div>YL</div>		
<div><h3>2.5 Introducing Philosophy</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group A: everyone likes the tutor and found the preparation videos are very helpful</li><li>• Group B: students thought that the tutor was very helpful and encourages students to ask questions</li><li>• Both teachers were very good at explaining the concepts and have a great teaching style</li><li>• Students enjoy the topics and feel that the discussions help them think more about the subject</li><li>• Some students felt that the classes were too dense – there is too much information during each class and it is often hard to keep up. Students felt that some articles were too advanced and complicated, but noted that this may be due to the subject matter being new to them.</li><li>• Students would like more discussion with other students, and would find it beneficial if the teacher could highlight the main points of the topic during the class.</li></ul></div>	<div>MK</div>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students are worried that they are not able to discuss philosophy on a deep level, and are anxious about writing the final essay</li> <li>However, overall students really enjoy the class and are surprised that Philosophy has become their favourite module this Term.</li> </ul> <p><b>AC</b> commented that the instructions and guidance for the final essay are coming in the second half of the Term, and hopefully some of those worries will ease. As with Psychology, all course materials are appropriate to the level of the course, and if students are finding the information difficult, this is something to feedback to the teacher in class.</p> <p><b>2.6 Introduction to Art and Design Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher is very creative and has many interesting ideas</li> <li>Students enjoy being able to learn new ways to make art and be creative. Seeing exhibitions and artists' work has been very useful and is really appreciated by the class.</li> <li>The feedback has been very supportive, but sometimes the guidance given to students is too general, and students do not know how to implement the advice</li> <li>Some students feel that there is too much homework and too little time to complete it</li> </ul> <p><b>AC</b> reminded the student representatives that students can go to the studio to do some of the practical work. However, if they are behind on homework, they should discuss this with the teachers. Although the workload is heavy, it is intended to give students a structure each week, and, ultimately, to help students prepare for Undergraduate study.</p> <p><b>2.7 Living and Learning in Britain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students find the teachers great.</li> <li>Students enjoy the discussions and the topics, however, some feel that the topics are not useful to them.</li> <li>More guidance on how to use the portfolio will be beneficial.</li> <li>Students hope to have more outside activities such as walks or museum visits.</li> </ul> <p><b>AC</b> informed students that there will be a trip to Holyrood Park in week 10 of the current Term, and more visits are planned for Terms 2 and 3. It has been difficult to plan for these trips in the current situation. Whilst the programme team would like to plan interesting activities, health and safety will have to remain top priorities.</p> <p>In response to the student comments regarding the course topics, <b>AC</b> explained that it is all about skills such as discussion, argumentation and language skills – the focus is on how to structure the discussion and express a point of view effectively, and not so much on the content of the topic. <b>AC</b> will add more guidance on how to complete the portfolio.</p>	<p>YL</p> <p>CS</p>
3.	Discussion	
	<p><b>AC</b> asked the student representatives how they felt about the programme as a whole, and how they are finding the mixture of digital and in-person teaching.</p> <p>Students made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, they prefer in-person teaching, however, digital lectures save them time from having to go to campus</li> <li>In-person teaching fosters communication and discussions. It is easier to ask questions about the content and to participate in class. Students are more focused on the topics.</li> <li>Most students have not had in-person teaching in a very long time and are enjoying being able to talk to people and make friends again.</li> </ul> <p><b>KA</b> asked if IFP students would be interested in meeting students from different programmes at the Centre for Open Learning. COL has recently appointed a Community Engagement Officer who is focusing on building a community of staff and students across programmes and</p>	

	<p>disciplines. <b>KA</b> asked if the student representatives could speak to their classmates and find out whether the IFP will be interested in meetings other students, and if yes, how would they like to do it.</p> <p>The programme representatives responded that, overall, IFP students would be interested in meeting students from other programmes, and will pass this on to the Term 2 representatives to report on for the next SSLC.</p> <p><b>AC</b> thanked the student representatives for their hard work and the very useful feedback.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 13:42</p>	
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