

School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences

Psychology MA and BSc

Student Staff Liaison Committee Meeting

Thursday 13th October at 12.30pm

Room S.38, 7 George Square

Present : Dr Alexa Morcom (Chair), Dania Abu-Sharkh (Year 3 Rep'), Dr Kasia Banas (Snr Teaching Coordinator), Dr Dave Carmel (Year 4 Course Organiser) Laura Cobban (Co-Chair and Year 4 Rep'), Dr Martin Corley (Head of Department) Robert Dudek (Year 1 Rep'), Taranah Gazder (Year 2 Rep), Dr Michelle Luciano (Year 3 Course Organiser), Megan McDougall (Year 4 Rep'), Alexandra McGregor (Year 3 Rep'), Dr Adam Moore, (Year 1 Course Organiser) Dr Rene Mottus (Year 2 Course Organiser) Eliina Takala (Year 2 Rep') Aleksandra Tkacz (Year 1 Rep')

In attendance: Mrs Tamsin Taylor-Welch (Minute Taker)

A. Morcom welcomed the meeting and reminded the Committee that it's a shared chairing procedure. Laura Cobban is co-chair.

1. News:

New Teaching Coordinator

New Teaching Coordinator Dr Eva Murzyn has been appointed. Dr Murzyn works occasional days at present, but is contracted to work full-time from January with Snr Teaching Coordinator Dr Kasia Banas.

New online handbooks

Dr Banas reported that this was ongoing but reminded Class Reps to provide her with their pictures for the website. Information about Teaching Coordinator roles to be added.

Provision of Teaching Programme Review Report

Dr Morcom informed the meeting that the Report will be made available to all students, once the staff have decided the best location to store it. Staff in the process of liaising with Class Reps on this.

Action Points that appeared in the Report included:

Closing the loop and making apparent that students' needs are listened to. Dr Morcom reported that the Teaching Action Group is currently working on how we can effectively close loop.

Clarification of aims of assessment. The Teaching Action Group is engaged in a review of assessment. Dr Morcom reported that a consultation with students will soon be carried out in relation to the Honours programme.

Greater opportunities and support for UG study abroad. Staff members Drs Billy Lee, Nic Chevalier and Dr Banas also being involved as regards the briefing for 2nd year students when it comes to Study Abroad.

EVASYS and Results of Honours Feedback Surveys

Psychology staff including Drs Alex Weiss and Bob Logie have helped to reduce the size of the EVASYS questionnaire. They have successfully reduced email bombardment from one email per-student, per-course to simply one email. There are also (slightly) fewer questions. The team would have liked to reduce EVASYS questionnaire further, but were not permitted to do so.

Dr Morcom reported on last year's Honours Feedback Surveys. Two-thirds of students felt that staff feedback was very good or good. Students especially liked formative comments given on drafts (Dissertation/Lit' Review). From student reports and staff analysis, guidelines have been provided for markers for written feedback on Turnitin.

New in: Staff formative feedback comments are now also provided on a draft of the Group Project (thus all major written work for Core Honours courses), as well as in Dr Mottus' pre-Hons Literature Summary.

Dr Morcom requested samples of student work to be submitted where written feedback was especially useful, for use as exemplars for new markers.

Action: Hons Reps to remind their cohort that this needs to be done.

Transition to Honours workshop

Dr Banas and Abby Shovlin from IAD are providing a Transition to Honours workshop for Activity Week.

Student-staff interaction

Greater interaction between students and staff: Staff are handing out comment cards for Honours students to make suggestions mid-course. Has thus far proved very constructive.

Meetings in person with Honours students to take place in Week 7 of each semester (free tea, coffee and cake). 4th Year class reps to encourage students especially those who are not happy so that they too can have input.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 17 March 2016

Matters Arising from the minutes

Year 2 Course content overlap with Year 1

Dr Bonnie Auyeung to ensure that this does not happen. Dr Hugh Rabagliati has written the new Year 1 slides, now that both Psychology 1 and Psychology 2 have been tweaked and split. This will significantly lessen the risk of overlap.

Basement Labs usage

Students need the computers with the correct programs on, but the internet is intermittent in a number of areas on the central campus, and students cannot get the programs on their own devices. This is due to technical problems within the University.

Recommendation that students go to the Mobile Devices Clinic. Martin Corley explained that the new lab is being built, which may be the cause of some of the issues. But there will be a brand new lab at the end of it.

Action: Year 4 Reps to compile a list of the working computers (Greenfield Suite etc.) and post out to students.

Action: Dr Banas and Year 4 Reps to create posters with the lab timetable, so students know when they can come to the basement and use the rooms.

Writing Clinic on the basis for a bid for extra funding

A new School-wide initiative that's being piloted for Year 3 students. The Director/Coordinator of this is: Jim Donaldson (Linguistics) and will commence in November.

The aim is to make it work first with those who'd benefit most (Year 3) it will then be expanded to Year 4 assuming it's a success.

Feedback Irregularities (17 March Minutes)

Dr Carmel as the new Course Organiser for Year 4 will ensure the following:

Supervisors to give written formative feedback on **one draft** of the Introduction, Methods and Results submitted by students.

Dr Carmel asked the Rep's to remind students that the form of written feedback will differ from Supervisor to Supervisor.

Action: Year 4 Class Reps to encourage their cohort to notify them if they don't receive feedback from their Supervisor. The Reps will encourage the student to address this with the Supervisor in the first instance. Failing that, the complainant will be directed to Dr Carmel.

It's acknowledged that students struggle with moving from notes taken from their research and writing it in a coherent fashion in keeping with Dissertation

requirements. the writing up. Dr Carmel reported that there will be a talk (date tba) given by himself to help students with this.

Possible Social Event

It is hoped that there will be a Dinner for Psychology students after Dissertation hand-in.

3. Year 4 Reports and Feedback

Winter Examinations – why don't we have them for Year 4?

Answer: Summer examinations were put in place many years ago for several reasons including to let students concentrate on their Dissertation and integrate information from other courses over the year (for greater depth of knowledge).

A change in the Honours programme is now in discussion for future years, and staff are keen for student input. Dr Corley added that it's important that students give input to the creation/alteration of current curricula and so it's important that the student opinion is heard.

All lecturers were contacted by Dr Carmel with a request that they offer a Q&A session in advance of examinations for students to attend.

Action: Year 4 Reps to email cohort to advertise the Q&A session timetable for the four courses that have examinations.

Laura as Co-Chair then commenced chairing the meeting.

4. Year 3 Reports and Feedback

Print out of RMS2 lab sheets

This has already been resolved with the Tutor providing these this week (Teaching Week 4). They will continue to do so.

Exam Feedback Day

Many students did not attend. The few who attended didn't feel that it was particularly helpful, due to staff being absent (tutor had returned to the US, another tutor had left the University and a third tutor was ill).

Laura Cobban suggested that Dr Mante Nieuwland who left the University in the summer may have uploaded his feedback on Learn as this is what he did for the Year 4 students.

Action: Year 2 Class Reps to double-check Learn for Dr Nieuwland's comments and notify the cohort if they are there.

Dr Corley asked what format the students would prefer feedback to come in.

Students present at the meeting stated that physical feedback is popular for

those who are shy. Dr Morcom stressed that speaking with a lecturer is the best way *combined* with written comments. This is particularly true for exams where only limited written comments are possible.

It is not too late to get exam feedback. Laura Cobban reminded the meeting that all staff have email, phone etc. so if a student is shy they can use this method. Also office hours. Dr Carmel encouraged students to do this as soon as possible while memory of the exams is still (relatively) fresh

Action: Staff to draw up a general feedback sheet for each course. Based on the good attendance at, and positive feedback from students for, Statistics Clinics this year, Dr Morcom asked whether Feedback Clinics might be a better option than the current Exam Feedback Day format. Alexandra McGregor suggested that some students would gain confidence in asking questions as part of a group, rather than 1-2-1.

Action: M Luciano and D Carmel to liaise with class reps and consider a different, or mixed, format for Exam Feedback day next year.

Students have responded positively to Year 3 lectures and students feel in general that RMS beginning to make sense.

5. Year 2 Reports and Feedback

Stat's preparation in Year 1

Eliina Takala said Y2 students would find an Introduction to R in year 1 hugely beneficial. How R is included in a lab/tutorial. Students can then be prompted to download the data.

Martin Corley enquired as to whether students would like an RMS course that ran over 2 years to ensure in-depth knowledge. General consensus was mixed as it would take 20 credits away from Year 1 options.

Adam Moore enquired as to whether a zero-credit course running in year 1 would be considered by students as a positive thing. Class Reps felt that this would be a good idea and many students on combined degrees are used to this. It would be a combination of labs and tutorials alternating each week.

There will be a brown bag staff lunch about potentially teaching R in year 1.

Action: Year reps to create a poll to give to their year (Year 1 and 2).

Linking Readings to Specific Lectures

Students were confused as to what to read in advance of the lecture. However, this has now been resolved and the lecturer has fixed this by uploading what to read when into the Handbook.

Tutorial Timing

Feedback about the first tutorial is not always returned prior to the second, however the aim of this feedback is to improve performance for the longer term.

6. Year 1 Reports and Feedback

General Feedback Survey (a response from 14 students)

Students need to be encouraged to collect their feedback. Still some confusion as to what the PT does. This was explained to the meeting by Martin Corley that Personal Tutors are there for academic guidance.

Students' ideal would be to have a list of the correct answers so that they can check whether they were close or not. Adam Moore explained to those who'd approached him that there were correctish answers but there's no right and wrong.

Students happy with timing of labs and tutorials.

Action: Year 1 Students to ask cohort whether they had enjoyed the trip to the Camera Obscura so that staff know whether to offer it next year.

Students to also remind cohort that the tutors walking around during labs are there to answer questions. Lecturers to do this, too.

Action: Dr Banas to ensure a preface on How to Find Information Yourself goes in the handbook.

9. Any Other Business

Timetable issues on various systems

Dr Moore notified the meeting that the timetable doesn't appear for Year 1 tutorials. He will liaise with the Business School as to how they managed to do this.

Additionally, the 2015/16 timetable is getting pulled up (for some courses) rather than the 2016/17, causing great confusion – especially as Path pulls its information from DRPS when aiding students in course selection

RMS lecture times don't appear on the timetable at all. Moira Avraam to be approached in case this can be rectified within the Teaching Office.

Action: Dr Banas to investigate and ensure that the timetables that appear are the 2016/17 versions.

New Undergraduate Student Notebeook

Well received by students.

Queuing to Confirm Attendance

Not well received as Hons students in the majority of cases simply needed to show their card.

Laura Cobban suggested splitting the queuing system between pre-Hons and hons so as to alleviate this problem and hopefully also make it easier for the Teaching Office staff.

Action: Tamsin Taylor-Welch to make enquiries about splitting the queuing system between pre-Hons and Hons.

Meeting came to a close. Next meeting: Thursday 17 November, room S38 at 12h30.