

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

Minute of the meeting held at 2pm on 9 February 2016 in Room 5.15 Charteris Land

Present: Dr P Allison (Convener), Dr S Beames, Dr E Boeren, Dr H Christie, Dr R Ewins, Dr J Li, Dr A Niven, Dr S Psycharakis, Ms R O'Neill, Dr G Robinson, Dr C Rosenhan, Dr C Sinclair, Dr D Torrance, Dr J Telford, Dr T Turner, Mr P Udofia and Dr C Valentin.

In attendance Ms S Colegrove, Mr J MacAllister, Professor J Robertson, Ms L Rowand and Mrs D Scott

Apologies Ms S Chapman, Dr E Christie, Mr R Easton, Mr P Evans, Dr S Fawcner, Professor L Florian, Ms N Gilbert, Dr A Macpherson, Dr C Nash, Dr G Reid, Ms R Rennie, Dr P Sangster, Ms W Timmons, Ms K Woomble

1. Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed all to the meeting, and in particular welcomed Mr P Udofia who was attending SPGSC for the first time. Apologies were as noted above.

2. Minute of the meeting held on 17 November 2015

The minute was approved as an accurate record.

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

3.2 University Programme and Course Handbook Policy (item 3.27 refers)

The Convener was to raise this matter with the School Director of Teaching and Learning.
[Action: Convener]

3.3 Assessment and feedback turnaround times (item 3.3 refers)

Despite the many concerns voiced at the last meeting of SPGSC, Dr Ewins had received no further comments on the assessment turnaround and feedback policy. Dr Ewins noted that complying with the policy for semester 1 assessments had resulted in some staff being required to meet feedback deadlines at the same time as launching semester 2 courses. Although this problem potentially could be avoided by delaying the hand in dates, such a move would impact on students by giving them little time between the end of semester 1 assessment and the start of semester 2 teaching.

Whilst most colleagues had succeeded in complying with the timelines, this had come at a cost. There was concern that the lack of flexibility in the policy meant that feedback might be of a poorer quality and/or other matters which would be of a greater benefit to the student experience were being sacrificed so that tutors could meet the deadline.

It was reported that the College QA Committee had suggested that colleagues try different forms of feedback. The intention behind the policy was to ensure that students received timely feedback that could be put into effect for their next assignment. It had been suggested that group feedback be given by the 15 day deadline, thereby satisfying the requirement, and

tutors could still give more specific feedback on an individual basis when assignments were returned. Members of SPGSC considered that this would not be a satisfactory approach for a number of reasons including increasing workload and generating a higher volume of queries from students worried about their assignment mark in light of listening to the generic feedback. Moreover, it was also not possible to give accurate generic feedback without having marked all the assignments and prepared individual feedback comments.

It was agreed to hold an informal meeting to discuss this matter further. It was hoped to then produce a short paper highlighting the experiences of colleagues within the School in meeting the 15 day deadline. This paper could be discussed at a future meeting of SPGSC and possibly forwarded to CPGSC and CQAC. **[Action: Convener and RE to organise meeting and prepare paper]**

3.4 Marketing and Webpages (item 4.1 refers)

The School Marketing Officer had worked with programme directors and School Web Developer to review and update PGT programme pages. The Convener thanked all those involved for the work undertaken to complete this task. It was noted that the PGR programme webpages were also currently being reviewed and updated.

3.5 Induction Reviews – PGT and PGR (item 4.4 refers)

These reviews were ongoing and would report to SPGSC in due course

3.6 Revisions to MSc Learning for Sustainability Degree Programme Table (item 6.1 refers)

The Convener was to meet with the programme director to discuss the proposed amendments to the degree programme table.

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

This paper had been revised in accordance with SPGSC's recommendations and had been forwarded to the Board of Studies for approval.

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

The actions advised by SPGSC were in process and it was hoped that these would help to strengthen the links between the Graduate School and the Careers Service.

3.9 Streamlining of examination boards (item 8 refers)

The Convener had written to all external examiners in accordance with the plan to streamline Board of Examiners' meetings.

3.10 Personal Tutor System (item 10 refers)

The Convener would confirm with the Senior Personal Tutor whether all personal tutors had been reminded to record meetings with their tutees and other relevant information on the Meetings/Notes tab within EUCLID. **[Action: Convener]**

3.11 Path (item 12.1 refers)

The Convener hoped that it would be possible to have a presentation on Path at a future meeting of SPGSC but this had not yet been arranged. **[Action: Convener/Secretary]**

4. **Convener's Business**

4.1 Ceilidh

The Convener thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the ceilidh. It had been a popular and enjoyable event.

4.2 Application and recruitment trends and conversion activities

Sarah Colegrove, Senior Marketing and Communications Officer tabled a paper with data showing the percentage change in offers and acceptances per programme between 2015 and 2016. It was noted that in most cases, the number of applications and offers were higher in 2016 than in 2015. However, the number of Home/EU applicants had fallen, contrary to the trend elsewhere in the College.

It was noted that applications for MSc TESOL and MSc Education had not been closed in January/February this year as had happened in previously.

The Convener had hoped the Director of Professional Services might be able to attend SPGSC to discuss the School's target figures for 2016/17. However, as these figures were still being discussed with the School Executive, it had been agreed to delay this to a future meeting of SPGSC. **[Action: Convener to follow up]**. It was important to ensure that the target figures given to programmes were both realistic and that there was capacity within teaching teams to provide for any projected increases in student numbers.

SPGSC discussed various conversion activities that programme teams might undertake. These included online information sessions, newsletters and regular e-communications to offer holders. At least one programme team had been intending to hold an online information session but had found it difficult to organise as there was currently no dedicated IT support within the School. **[Action: Convener to highlight this to the School Executive]** Different kinds of e-communications could be used to keep in touch with applicants. Newsletters or messages about individual programmes were probably most appealing to applicants but were also more resource heavy to develop than a single communication that could be sent to applicants to all programmes within the School. **[Action: Sarah Colegrove to forward programme directors examples of applicant conversion communications and newsletters]**

Although ideally it would be preferable to develop specific newsletters or messages for each programme or group of programmes, realistically many programme directors and programme secretaries did not have the capacity to do this. It was agreed to draft a message to send to applicants that could be used by all programme teams if they so wished. Dr J Li, Dr A Niven, Ms S Colegrove and the Convener volunteered to prepare this and circulate to SPGSC for comment. **[Action: Conversion message to be drafted by group named above.]**

4.3 Electronic submission and feedback

The College's Chief Information Officer had recently met with representatives from the Undergraduate Teaching Office and the Graduate School Office. The College wished to promote the use of electronic submission for assignments and electronic feedback to students.

Compared to some other schools, the School of Education is relatively advanced in its use of these.

The Chief Information Officer was keen to speak to academic colleagues who currently read and marked the electronic version of dissertations in preference to the hard copy. It was understood that further work was required to overcome the barriers to electronic only submission of dissertations. The Graduate School Office had been asked to nominate two large classes which could be used as pilot areas in semester two to trial electronic only submission. **[Action: Graduate School Office to identify courses for this pilot and coordinate reporting back to Chief Information Officer on outcomes of the pilot at end of semester.]**

4.4 Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes

This Code of Practice was to be discontinued from 2016/17 as the information contained within it exists elsewhere.

4.5 EvaSys

EvaSys was a course evaluation tool which had been piloted within the University and used by a few course organisers within the School for end of course student evaluations. The system was to be used throughout the University from 2016/17. Schools were permitted to add a small number of School specific questions at the end of the standard questionnaire. The questionnaire could be completed quickly online in class if students used smart phones or tablets. Analysis of the data could be undertaken relatively quickly and presented to the cohort of students in class at a later date.

4.6 Masters Scholarships

The College Office had recently forwarded information about the new UK Masters Access Awards and UK/EU Masters Awards.

There were 20 Access Awards available to UK students accepted on a full-time one year Masters degree programme in any subject offered by the University starting in 2016-2017. Details of the award and eligibility criteria were available at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/uk-eu/university-scholarships/masters-access>.

Six of the 150 UK/EU Masters Scholarships available for the 2016-2017 academic session at the University of Edinburgh had been awarded to the School of Education. Most of the awards would provide funding of £4,500. Details of the award and eligibility criteria were available at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/postgraduate/uk-eu/university-scholarships/uk-masters>

5. **Technology Enhanced Education (TEE) Strategy and Research Methods courses review**

5.1 SPGSC welcomed Professor Judy Robertson to the meeting to discuss these two important papers.

5.2 The School's Technology Enhanced Education Strategy had been circulated recently as part of the School newsletter. Professor Robertson outlined the strategy and its objectives and responded to questions and comments from members of the committee. It was agreed that although there were many examples of the use of technology in an educational context within the School, the sharing of this good practice could be much improved. There were concerns about the desirability of having lectures available online as this might result in lecturers being more conservative in the content of their classes if they knew they could be viewed by a wide

audience. Individual tutors and lecturers should be allowed to decide whether or not they wished to make their classes available in this way.

It was noted that now that the strategy had been approved by the School Executive, the working group would be focussing on how to implement it operationally. Benchmarks would be identified to help measure its implementation.

It was noted that the IAD was running an event entitled Promoting active learning using technology on Tuesday 19 April from 12.30pm – 2.30pm as part of its Course Organiser Network lunch series. Full details of this event and others in the series this semester were available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/networks/co-network>

5.3 SPGSC also welcomed Professor Robertson's report on the Graduate School's suite of three research methods courses. The report highlighted the strengths of the courses which included:

- The courses are structure to take advantage of the wide research expertise in the School and encourage staff from all institutes to work together;
- The courses are regularly updated with new material and new research;
- The planning research conference day works well and is useful for preparing students for the dissertation;
- Moderation is carried out appropriately to ensure consistency between markers;

It also made a number of recommendations and suggestions including a peer pairing system, a staff away day, an increase in the involvement of senior research staff, the introduction of a mini-conference or research clinic during eh dissertation period.

SPGSC thanked Professor Robertson for this thorough report. It was reassuring that the research methods courses were in good health and noted that the course leader and course team would further consider the recommendations and suggestions in the report.

6. Programme and Course Matters

6.1 MSc Educational Research: Revisions to DPT

SPGSC homologated this proposal which change the current DPT of MSc Educational Research to bring the course list up-to-date.

6.2 MSc Dance Science & Education DPT amendment

Following consultation with the external examiner and in order to allow increased flexibility in the choice and range of optional courses available to students, this paper proposed that the programme's DPT be amended to allow students to take up to 30 credits at SCQF level 10. This would widen the list of possible option courses although all course choices would still require the approval of the programme director. This change would also bring the programme in line with regulation 8 of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study. SPGSC approved the proposal. **[Action: The proposal be forwarded to the Board of Studies for approval]**

6.3 Revisions to course descriptor for TESOL for Young Learners (EDUA11026)

This paper had not been circulated to the committee as the course organiser had been awaiting comments from the Convener. It was agreed that the proposal could be considered

outwith the committee, and if appropriate Convener's Action taken to allow it to be forwarded to the Board of Studies. **[Action: Subject to the paper's approval via Convener's Action, it be forwarded to the Board of Studies]**

6.4 New course proposal: Developing as a Strategic Educational Leader

SPGSC homologated this proposal. It noted that the new Masters in Leadership and Learning programme was in the process of progressing through the various committee approval stages. The Board of Studies had approved the proposed revisions of Course 1 of the Masters in Educational Leadership and Management, to match Course 1 of the 'Into Headship' PG Certificate component of the new Masters in Leadership and Learning. Students waiting to enrol on the new programme would be able to take this course, Developing as a Strategic Educational Leader, credits for which could later be used as APL for the new Masters in Leadership and Learning.

6.5 Changes to assessment arrangements for course relating to visual impairment and deafness

This paper proposed that students who achieved less than 50% for any of the listed specialist courses for teachers of deaf and visually impaired learners be given the opportunity to resubmit once to achieve the 50% threshold. The requirement for a 50% pass mark was in line with practice elsewhere in the UK and had the support of the external examiner and professional bodies. SPGSC recommended that the programme director seek advice from the College Postgraduate Office to confirm this was permissible under University regulations and whether or not the resubmitted mark could count towards the final overall mark and/or for progression. **[Action: Programme Director to discuss with College. Convener's Action to be taken if appropriate to allow the proposal to be forwarded to the Board of Studies for approval.]**

6.6 Ethics Forms and processes

Unfortunately neither Professor S Bayne or Dr J Brown were able to attend the meeting to discuss the introduction of a new online system for the ethical approval process. They will be invited to attend the next meeting of SPGSC. Several members of the committee had seen the proposed online system and were supportive of its introduction. Committee members were encouraged to think through the implications for students on their programmes and the ethical approval processes for students at all levels (0-4)

6.7 External requests to access Turnitin repository

Discussion of this item was postponed to the next meeting of SPGSC.

6.8 Dissertation formatting and presentation guidance

Guidance on the format, presentation and layout of PGT dissertations was included in the revised dissertation handbook.

6.9 Course approval and amendment guidelines

SPGSC members noted the procedures for proposing a new course or amending an existing one. It was agreed that point 1 (a) be amended to read: "Seek advice from Director/Depute Director PG Studies and relevant programme director(s)." Subject to that amendment, the paper was approved and it was agreed it be published on the intranet and on the SPGSC webpages. **[Action: CV]**

7. SPGSC membership and remit

SPGSC noted and approved the revised membership and remit and requested that these be made available on the intranet and on the SPGSC webpages. **[Action: Secretary]**

8. Short Life Working Groups

8.1 MSc (R) Short Life Working Group: Report

It was noted that in September 2015 a new University policy had been introduced in order to streamline and ensure consistency across Masters by Research programmes. This policy was available at:

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/MScByResearch_Structure.pdf

The Graduate School's existing programme did not conform to this policy and the SLWG had been tasked with reviewing the policy and reporting to SPGSC on its implications and the options available regarding Masters by Research in the School. The SLWG recognised three options available and recommended that the third option, namely to write a new MSc (R) programme, be adopted.

It was recognised that there were some areas that would require further consideration, for instance how research methods training should be included in the programme and whether existing research methods courses might be utilised

SPGSC welcomed this report and thanked the members of the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) for the work they had undertaken in researching and preparing it. SPGSC broadly supported the recommendation of the SLWG. It was agreed that documentation to support a revised MSc (R) programme be prepared and brought to SPGSC for consideration. It was hoped the new programme might be offered from 2017/18. **[Action: Convener, Tony Turner and Ellen Boeren to prepare programme documentation for MSc (R)]**

9. Administration of ad hoc scholarships: Draft guidelines

SPGSC noted and approved the guidelines. The guidelines should be made available on the intranet. **[Action: Secretary]**

10. Accessibility Matters

Discussion of these papers was postponed until the next meeting of SPGSC

11. AOCB

There were no matters considered under AOCB

CLOSED BUSINESS

12. External Examiner appointments

12.1 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for MSc Education: Language - Theory, Practice & Literacy

The committee approved the appointment of Professor David Wray, University of Warwick as external examiner for the above programme. **[Action: Secretary to forward to College Office for approval]**

12.2 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for MSc Education and MSc Educational Research

The committee approved the appointment of Dr Laura Colucci-Gray, University of Aberdeen as external examiner for the above programme. **[Action: Secretary to forward to College Office for approval]**

12.3 Nomination for appointment of External Examiner for MEd Additional Support for Learning (Visual Impairment)

The committee approved the appointment of Dr Joao Roe, Bristol City Council as external examiner for the above programme. **[Action: Secretary to forward to College Office for approval]**

Ms Lesley Rowand
Secretary, School Postgraduate Studies Committee