

Minutes: Staff Student Liaison Committee

International Foundation Programme



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Centre for Open Learning

18th February 2022

Present: Anya Clayworth (**AC**)
Kirsty Adamson (**KA**)
Ftooh Al Khaled (**FAK**)
Jinyang Zhang (**JZ**)
Jingnan Zhao (**JZh**)

Chair; Programme Director
Deputy Head of COL
Programme Representative
Programme Representative
Programme Representative

In Attendance: Sasha Wood (**SW**)
Teaching Office Administrator

Start Time: 13:00
End Time: 13:40

1	Welcome / Agenda	AC		
	AC convened the meeting at 13:00. AC welcomed all present and thanked all for attending. AC reminded students to be kind with their feedback and to be mindful of what is practically possible.			
2	Student Items			
	<p>The student representatives used a Microsoft Form to gather feedback from class mates and divided the collection of feedback by courses, each representative taking a different course. They reported on the following Term 2 courses:</p> <p>2.1 Introduction to Social Anthropology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students enjoy the tutorials and find there is lot of good group discussion• The students found it insightful to use their personal backgrounds to relate to the subject and help them understand the themes• Students find the reading materials difficult – they find the vocabulary difficult. Students already have a glossary however in general they struggle to grasp the idea of the texts since they are new to the subject. They think the level in the texts is high for having just started.• They would also like there to be more connection between the reading materials and what they discuss in the tutorial <table border="1"><tr><td>Action:</td><td>AC to make the tutor aware that students are having issues with the materials</td></tr></table> <p>2.2 Introducing Cultural Studies (Credit Plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most students think the course content is at the right level, though some think it is too easy and some think it is too difficult• Some students think the level of the texts and reading is too high and that the amount of work is too overwhelming• The course contains a lot of theories that are difficult to grasp• Students prefer tutorials to lectures	Action:	AC to make the tutor aware that students are having issues with the materials	<p>FAK</p> <p>JZh</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students enjoy different aspects of the course, such as learning about culture, and sustainable impactImprovements the students would like to see:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Easier readingsThe tutor to explain things more slowly and clearly <p>AC asked what students were finding difficult about the readings e.g. vocabulary or concepts.</p> <p>JZh thinks that students find the theories difficult.</p> <p>AC explained that there is often a jump between term 1 and term 2, so it is natural that students find this quite difficult. She added that it is only week 5, so it is likely that students will start to get to grips with the level as they move through the term.</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Action:</td><td>AC to make the tutor aware that students are finding the materials difficult</td></tr></table>	Action:	AC to make the tutor aware that students are finding the materials difficult	
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<p>2.3 Reading English Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 students think level is right, one thinks it is very difficultSome think the readings are too hardStudents think that the tutorials are the most effective teaching approachThe students think the Discussion board helps a lotAspects the students like best: course content, discussion board, mind mapsImprovements they would like made: content of reading – they find it too hardStudents would like it if people participated more <p>Regarding the readings being challenging, AC commented that students had been given the readings before Christmas to allow them to get ahead. She hopes that students invested some time on the readings before the course started, so that they could work through the difficult parts during term time.</p>	JZh		
<p>2.4 Living and Learning in Britain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students are loving the diversity of the content and the guest speakers. Students feel they are learning so much from the guest speakersThey enjoy the trips and feel they are getting a lot from these and getting a feeling of Edinburgh and where they are living.Some think the course could have been online instead of in person, and condensed to one term. Some students think that all the information they’re learning could have been condensed/shortened to one term, and by doing this, there could have been space for another elective. <p>AC explained that the course cannot be done in one term and has to be done over three terms, as it is worth 15 credits. Term 3 will be a seminar-based activity, working with a partner on an aspect of British culture and presenting to the class. AC added that often students don’t see the connection between terms until they start on the term 3 project.</p>	FAK		
<p>2.5 Foundation English for Academic Purposes 2 Plus</p> <p><u>Group B</u> Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Group discussions are very helpful and discussion boards are also helpful – students are engaging here	FAK		

	<p>27. Introduction to Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 8 responses • 3 think that the course is difficult and 4 think it is appropriate • 5 think the texts and readings are very difficult • Some will not choose politics in their future studies and feel it is hard to keep up with other students • Students think that group discussion is the most effective learning approach • Students think the tutor is great, he uses his personal experience as examples to make students understand the concepts more easily. They have a high opinion of the tutor. <p>AC: Interesting that students are finding the readings difficult again. Important in preparing them for the journey to undergraduate study.</p> <p>AC added that for those students who are not planning to study politics at undergraduate level, they should be reminded that they are still gaining lots of useful academic skills through this course.</p> <p>2.8 Ideas and Concepts in Art and Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students find the quantity of homework overwhelming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They're happy to have in-studio time, however there are different paces among students – some can complete within the class time and some need more time. • Students find that the tutorial is the most effective teaching approach • Suggestion that tutors have more 1-1 time with students, to get an understanding of what each student is feeling and give more targeted help • Students like working together and find the class has an active atmosphere <p>AC asked if more studio time would helpful for homework.</p> <p>JZh asked if studio time can be added during the weekend.</p> <p>AC explained that the studio is not open over the weekend, however students can book space in the Art college through the library booking site. They can also use Evolution house (though it is currently shut due to a flood).</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Action:</td> <td>AC to ask OR for more studio time for students.</td> </tr> </table>	Action:	AC to ask OR for more studio time for students.	<p>JZ</p> <p>JZ</p>
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3.	Other			
	<p><u>Social spaces</u></p> <p>AC explained that there is work being done on the buildings in which IFP teaching takes place and they are looking at creating more social spaces. They would like to know what students would like from these spaces, for example, would they like to get hot water for drinks and snacks. They will get in touch with the programme representatives soon to ask them for help in gathering student feedback on this.</p> <p>KA remarked how useful it was to hear students' feedback and reiterated how important this is.</p> <p>AC added that some things they are exploring will be more longer term – each cohort helps to improve the programme for future cohorts.</p>	<p>AC & KA</p>		

	<p>AC thanked the representatives for their hard work and congratulated them on their excellent presentation of the feedback.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 13:40.</p>	
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