Minutes: Staff Student Liaison Committee International Foundation Programme



18th February 2022

Present: Anya Clayworth (AC) Chair; Programme Director

Kirsty Adamson (KA) Deputy Head of COL

Ftooh Al Khaled (FAK)

Jinyang Zhang (JZ)

Programme Representative

Programme Representative

Programme Representative

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

 Start Time:
 13:00

 End Time:
 13:40

Welcome / Ag	genda	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.			
Student Items			
divided the co	epresentatives used a Microsoft Form to gather feedback from class mates and illection of feedback by courses, each representative taking a different course. If on the following Term 2 courses:		
 Stude The s subje Stude Stude the to havir They 	 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. 		
Action:	AC to make the tutor aware that students are having issues with the materials		
Most easySome of wo	ng Cultural Studies (Credit Plus) It students think the course content is at the right level, though some think it is too and some think it is too difficult It is students think the level of the texts and reading is too high and that the amount ork is too overwhelming course contains a lot of theories that are difficult to grasp	JZh	

- Students enjoy different aspects of the course, such as learning about culture, and sustainable impact
- Improvements the students would like to see:
 - o Easier readings
 - o The tutor to explain things more slowly and clearly

AC asked what students were finding difficult about the readings e.g. vocabulary or concepts.

JZh thinks that students find the theories difficult.

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.

Action:	AC to make the tutor aware that students are finding the materials	
	difficult	

2.3 Reading English Literature

- 2 students think level is right, one thinks it is very difficult
- Some think the readings are too hard
- Students think that the tutorials are the most effective teaching approach
- The students think the Discussion board helps a lot
- Aspects the students like best: course content, discussion board, mind maps
- Improvements they would like made: content of reading they find it too hard
- Students would like it if people participated more

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.

2.4 Living and Learning in Britain

- Students are loving the diversity of the content and the guest speakers. Students feel they are learning so much from the guest speakers
- They 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.

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.

2.5 Foundation English for Academic Purposes 2 Plus

FAK

Group B

Positives

Group discussions are very helpful and discussion boards are also helpful – students are engaging here

JZh

FAK

- Applying knowledge through assignment and receiving feedback throughout the term is really helpful. Receiving practice questions through the discussion board and receiving formative feedback is really helpful for putting the essay together
- Classes are engaging and very well taught
- Students have learnt many useful skills as well as more autonomy and independence in learning

Improvements

- Content could be a bit more challenging. Some students think it is fairly easy for someone who has studied English in high school
- Some students think that grouping by IELTS alone may not be enough, and that perhaps they should also look at prior education, so that students can be challenged more.

AC commented that while students may feel it is not challenging, there are no students scoring in the 90s, so they are still being challenged. In the selection process, they have limited knowledge of students' prior education, however it would also not be practical to look at this during the selection process due to the volume of applicants.

Group A

JZh

- Some students find the final essays too difficult
- Teaching approach: students prefer tutorials and group discussion
- Best things: learning knowledge, improving writing skills and getting ideas for future plans
- Organisation is really clear
- Students think they get a better understanding when they are in class rather than when online
- Improvements:
 - o Shorter class times
 - o More time specifically for writing
- Students also think that discussion questions should be more specific and that readings are not always interesting
- Students find the classroom too small, they would prefer a bigger one where they don't feel squished together

AC thanked **JZh** for the feedback and commented that classes are getting shorter – Term 2 classes are 120 minutes per class, compared with almost 200 minutes in term 1.

AC explained that unfortunately they have been unable to resolve the rooming issue as it is the only room available at the time.

2.6 Foundation English for Academic Purposes 2 Entry

- 11 students think the level is right the difficulty is appropriate and they have no problems with the content
- 4 students think it is difficult they find the reading and texts difficult
- Students think there is a lack of atmosphere due to the time of day (after lunch), they feel sleepy, it's too warm in the class and the tutor's talking speed is a little slow
- Students suggest using different types of content at that time, e.g. short videos or animations to help students understand readings better
- 6 students think the Personal Tutor plays an important role in learning. They would like a closer relationship between the PT and student e.g. increased frequency of drop-ins
- Students are very satisfied with group discussions they help everyone to get involved in the class, improve their critical thinking and give them space to voice their opinions

JΖ

27. Introduction to Politics

- 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.

AC: Interesting that students are finding the readings difficult again. Important in preparing them for the journey to undergraduate study.

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.

2.8 Ideas and Concepts in Art and Design

- Some students find the quantity of homework overwhelming
 - 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

AC asked if more studio time would helpful for homework.

JZh asked if studio time can be added during the weekend.

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).

Action: **AC** to ask **OR** for more studio time for students.

3. Other

Social spaces

AC & KA

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.

KA remarked how useful it was to hear students' feedback and reiterated how important this is.

AC added that some things they are exploring will be more longer term – each cohort helps to improve the programme for future cohorts.

JΖ

JΖ

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