

**Language Centre, School of Languages, Linguistics and Film
International Foundation Year 2021-22
Student Staff Liaison Committee
2nd December 2021**

Minutes

Staff members present:

Chris Massell (International Foundation Year Convenor/Chair)	Dr Peter Latham (IFP3000 ELSS/IFP3020 ISP Convenor/secretary)
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Student members present:

Romy Thomas (Co-chair) (Group 3)

Sarah Dolder Restrepo (Course Rep) (Group 1)

Patrizia Maren Margit Weinberger (Course Rep) (Group 1)

Christine Rosanna Mason (Course Rep) (Group 2)

Anna Saykina (Group 4)

Electra Myrianthous (Course Rep) (Group 5)

Mohammad Alsanousi (Group 6)

Abdulaziz Alqahtani (Group 7)

Responses from CM and PL are in italics.

Part 1: Preliminary items

N/A

Part 2: Student reports

Admissions, Induction and Enrolment

Admissions, induction and enrolment

- Students generally found the application process easy and straightforward.
- Some students feel that more could have been done during induction to provide practical information e.g. on how the course will function, the schedule, buildings and locations, with a greater focus on such practicalities. Specifically, a campus tour would have been helpful.
- Students found the presentations given by lecturers in induction very helpful for choosing their modules.
- Enrolment was problematic and difficult for some students; one student didn't receive an email about fees payment; for many students module enrolment was confusing and they received conflicting information (they received instructions to choose modules before enrolment via MySIS); some students experienced issues with payment (and consequently not being fully enrolled); information about payment plans was not clear; errors in administrative procedures resulted in two students being informed that they hadn't paid full fees when they had done so.
- *CM stated that he would contact the Finance department regarding fees payment and payment plans, and request that information on this be made clearer, and easily accessible. He also noted that there are ongoing attempts to liaise with SLLF admin to prevent students receiving MySIS notification that they should choose their modules before enrolling on the IFY.*
- *CM to explore feasibility of a campus tour during induction period.*

Reports from student course representatives

The Committee **received** reports from student course representatives and **noted** the following:

Academic Modules:

1. Introduction to Politics IFP3003

- Overall, students' experience of this module has been very positive; it is well organised and the readings are very helpful.
- There was a problem with deadlines i.e. the deadline for submission of the ELSS Extended Essay plan was 23.55 on Wednesday of Week Six, and the deadline for submission of the Politics test was 11am on Thursday of Week Six - some ELSS teachers allowed flexibility concerning submission of the Extended Essay, but some did not.

2. Introduction to Human Geography IFP3005

- Students think that the module is well organised and clearly structured.
- Some students think that there is an imbalance in assessments, because all of these are in the second half of the semester; these students found the workload difficult to manage because of the bunching of assessments towards the end of the semester.

3. **Introduction to English Literature IFP3007**
 - There were no comments on this module.
4. **Introduction to Film Studies IFP3009**
 - Some students feel that the module coursework is not sufficiently explained, though most feel that it is very clear.
 - Students generally think that the module QMplus page is very useful and provides clarity on the module structure, materials, and assessments; it is one of the easiest modules to access via QMplus.
5. **Pure Mathematics for Economics IFP3011**
 - Most people think that the module is very enjoyable and that the teacher explains everything well.
 - One student thinks that the online learning experience is terrible, mostly because the camera quality is very bad (going in and out of focus- which makes the demonstrations hard to follow).
 - Students have been confused by different and conflicting definitions of terms taken from various textbooks
 - Some students think that having seminars on campus and lectures online on QMplus (via PPT slides with audio commentaries) is not the most effective means of delivery; they feel that it would be preferable to have lectures on campus.
 - Students feel that technical problems are impacting negatively on lessons – it generally takes up to 30 minutes to resolve technical problems at the start of classes.
 - *CM noted that the module lecturer thought it would be more useful to have seminars on campus for support in solving problems arising from lectures, though this is under review.*
6. **Microeconomics IFP3013**
 - *CM explained the difference between SLLF and SEF regulations for assessment deadlines and submission periods and that SEF does not observe the SLLF 24 hour submission period, with students being given just 20 minutes after the duration of tests to upload their answers.*
 - *CM also noted that EC claims for Test One will be processed and approved (where appropriate), since there were problems with the release time for this test (i.e. it was delayed). He noted that all students' papers have been marked already, with no penalties for lateness noted. Students were sent Test Two at 9am and no problems were reported, and students were given 40 minutes to do the test and an additional 20 minutes to upload their answers via email. The duration of the upcoming on-campus test is 40 minutes.*
 - *CM noted students' concerns that some of the content of the second test was perceived as being absent from lectures (marginal analysis). He explained that students who were unable to do the more sophisticated analysis required for some parts of the test can still obtain 75+ marks out of 80 total marks, and that the test is designed by the lecturer to push students and to ascertain the extent*

of their abilities. He further noted that if there were issues with late submissions of test answers, these will be disregarded, with no penalties imposed. However, for Test Three the submission deadline will be strictly observed.

- Students were instructed to type their test answers and then convert the document to pdf, but some wanted to write their answers by hand.
- *CM explained that the lecturer is happy to mark handwritten tests and encouraged all students to take a photo of their work before the deadline as a time stamp in the event that there are any technical problems converting the file in the future.*
- One student has requested a change of lecturer; the student thinks that the lecturer embarrasses students and is rude to them when they ask a question. Students don't want to ask questions because they are afraid of being ridiculed for asking something they should know and made to feel foolish.
- Some other students think that the lecturer is not rude.
- Some students feel that the seminars are a waste of time, since there is no input from the teacher, apart from asking at the beginning if students have any questions. After this, students are put into groups to solve problems and there is no further input from the teacher.
- Some students struggle to understand the questions and think that it would be better to combine the two hours in one workshop, with the teacher solving all the problems students have been set.
- *CM noted that the lecture and seminar content is coordinated between the lecturer and the seminar teacher. He also suggested that students should make use of the lecturer's office hour to ask questions and seek additional help with the module content.*

7. Introduction to Business and Management IFP3015

- Students think that the module is well organised and that they are well prepared for assessments, lectures, and seminars, with very helpful practice exercises for assessments.

8. Mathematics for Business IFP3016

- Some students struggle with the content of the module.
- Students think that the teacher is good, but test feedback led to some feeling uncomfortable: solutions to the problems in the test were explained and scores were announced in class, with students comparing marks during the lesson, which made some of them unhappy about disclosing this information publicly.
- The teacher doesn't always go through and explain all the solutions to HW problems after students have been given time to work through them. Students feel that there is a need for greater clarity and fuller explanations, both for the test and for work done in lessons.
- Students think that the last test required students to apply concepts to a new problem which they should have been given more time to practise beforehand.

- The solutions to the problems in the test were explained and scores were announced in class, with students comparing marks during the lesson, which made some of them uncomfortable.

9. IFP 3023 The History of the UK from 1900 to 1955

- Students think that the module is well organised and well taught.
- Lectures and seminars are very interactive and well structured.
- Lectures are clear and the tasks students are given in seminars help them to focus fully on the lecture content.
- Overall, students are happy with the module.

10. English Language and Study Skills IFP3000 (Reading and Writing)

Group 1

- All the students are happy with the teacher and find the seminars interesting, though some students would like to have more on-campus classes.

Group 2

- Students are very positive about the classes and the teacher.

Group 3

- Students feel that there is a problem with deadlines and that the teacher should be more lenient in granting extensions and accepting late submissions. They also think that submission deadlines should be further apart, since they are currently very close together.
- One student lives an hour and a half away from the university and feels that having all of the semester two classes on campus will be highly problematic.

Group 4

- Students think that there is a friendly atmosphere in classes, which are well structured.

Group 5

- The majority of students in this group would like more classes to be on campus.

Group 6

- All of the students are satisfied with the teacher and the classes but some complained about deadlines, which they think should be further apart.

Group 7

- The students are positive about the teacher and the classes, which run smoothly and efficiently.
- *PL explained that since ELSS is intended to support students and help them develop the requisite skills to succeed in their other modules, it is important that there are opportunities for teachers to provide feedback on their writing, early on and often in the semester. He also pointed out that the first five deadlines are for short pieces of writing (four text response tasks, each of which is two paragraphs, and an essay plan). He further noted that the use of multiple deadlines is intended to help students*

develop the time management skills that are necessary for success on the IFY and in their future degree programmes.

- *PL also noted that the amount of input provided for ELSS is necessarily disproportionate to other modules, so that students receive sufficient support for performing well in all the modules*
- *CM noted that students have been advised to live near enough to campus to attend all their live lessons. As such, decisions about living very far from campus are inadvisable.*
- *CM and PL noted that it would be difficult to avoid work submission deadlines stacking in the end of the semester, as this is a common problem on many programmes, stemming from the fact that much of the content needs to be covered before students can be assessed on it.*

11. Personal Development

- Some students think that there is too much time spent in PD and that some of the tasks are not very useful for assignments, and are sometimes overlong. One student noted that the topics were very relevant and important for discussion.
- Students think that the reflective activities are good, but feel that there should be fewer when they have imminent deadlines at the end of the term.

Part 3: Programme delivery and other matters

Programme / module developments and amendments

- N/A

Online learning/teaching

The Committee **discussed** learning, teaching and assessment matters and noted the following:

- Some students have difficulty finding a quiet space on campus for online classes.
- Some students would like to continue in mixed mode in semester two, with access to recorded lectures on QMplus.
- Students generally think that the IFY teachers are very helpful and the lesson materials are easily accessible.
- Some students think that assessments in person on campus would be preferable to online submission because of problems sometimes encountered when submitting online.
- For some modules, particularly Politics, students think seminars are not useful because no one speaks, lack of participation online being a serious problem. This is at least in part because it is difficult for students to express their ideas concerning Politics in online seminars.

- For some modules, such as History, online webinars are enjoyable and helpful.
- Two students felt that it would be useful to have PD on campus next semester for greater interactivity, and noted the difficulty of engaging some students in online discussion despite the teachers' efforts (e.g. it therefore tends to be the same students driving the contributions online due to lack of others' participation).

On-campus learning/teaching

The Committee **discussed** learning, teaching and assessment matters and noted the following:

- Students think that on campus classes are more interactive than online lessons.

IFY Module Assessments

The Committee **discussed** learning, teaching and assessment matters and noted the following:

- *CM explained that there are more assessments on the IFY than on undergraduate programmes for two principal reasons.*
 - 1) *With more assessments, there are more opportunities for students to do well, so their success is not dependent on only a few formal assessments.*
 - 2) *The IFY assessments are valuable preparation for undergraduate programmes, and they allow students to develop the time management skills required for study on those programmes.*
- *CM also noted that students receive a great deal of support from their teachers on the IFY, and it is important to see this as an opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, as some students appreciate.*

Learning resources

The Committee **discussed** learning resources, including library facilities and resources and information technology, and **noted** the following:

- Students find the resources on QMplus for their different modules very useful.

Academic support

The Committee **discussed** academic support and noted the following:

- See comments above on learning and teaching.

Organisation and communication

- There were no comments specifically on organisation and communication.

Consideration and discussion of External Examiner reports

The Committee **received** external examiners reports and noted the following:

- N/A

Any other business

- N/A

Date of the next meeting

TBC

