



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of Modern and
Medieval Languages

Date Wednesday 11 November 2015

Time 12pm

At RFB 326

Subject Staff-Student Liaison Committee

Present Prof. Ledgeway (Chair), Mr Cooley (minutes), Mr Gibson (minutes), Ms Akinwoson, Ms Bingham, Dr Crowley, Ms Deconinck, Ms Dokovova, Prof. Jazszcolt, Mr Keates, Ms Hollingsworth, Ms Lake, Dr Mander, Dr Rhodes, Ms Warner

Apologies Mrs Speed

Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages Staff-Student Liaison Committee

Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on Friday 15 May

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

General Board Learning and Teaching Review

2. REPORTED: that the Faculty is currently drafting official responses to the General Board Learning and Teaching Review.

Background and introduction to the SSLC

3. The current Terms of Reference were approved pending two corrections to the 'Constituency of members': first, a position for a library representative should be included; second, there should be two MPhil Directors, one for literature/film and one for Linguistics.

Student Matters

MML Part I

- (i) Language and Oral Classes Timetabling
 4. REPORTED: that a student raised a concern about the 'free for all' nature of organizing language and oral classes. It was argued that the process made it difficult to avoid clashes and generally added to the stress of week 0 for Part IA students.
 5. RESOLVED: that a possible solution would be to send out diagnostic tests to students to complete before the start of term, so that they could be allocated to their classes earlier. This recommendation is to be passed on to the SLTOs.
 6. REPORTED: that students feel that some timetables currently presented on whiteboards would be more accessible if they were online.



7. It is noted that these could be presented on Moodle in the future.
8. It is noted that the committee would welcome more feedback on students' experience of the first few weeks of the year.

(ii) Use of German

9. REPORTED: that one student is concerned that their writing exercises in Use of German are currently limited to 250 words.
10. RESOLVED: that this concern will be passed on to the SLTOs for German.

MML Part II

(i) Part II Oral Exam

11. REPORTED: that some students feel that the guidelines for the Oral Exam are vague and that it is unclear what is expected of them as a result.
12. RESOLVED: that some examples of the Oral Exam could be made available in the library, as is currently done with dissertations. This would require the consent of students to have their exam recordings kept. Ms Akinwoson will consult with current Part II students about this issue.
13. It is noted that the Oral Exam could potentially be moved to take place later in the year. Ms Akinwoson will consult with current Part II students about this issue.

(ii) SL13 (Introduction to Polish)

14. REPORTED: that there are not enough copies of certain key texts for the current number of students.
15. RESOLVED: that the following possible solutions will be investigated by Mr Keates: first, the procurement of more copies of the texts; second, making some of the books overnight loan only; and finally, making photocopies or scans available in the library and on Moodle, copyright permitting.
16. It is noted that there is an unusually high number of students taking this paper this year.

(iii) Part II Translation

17. REPORTED: that a student has complained that the translation exam tests vocabulary more than actual translational skill. They suggest that a coursework method of assessment may work better.
18. It is noted that vocabulary is given a fairly low priority on the published marking scheme for the translation exam. It is also noted that the current method of translation assessment is self-contained and therefore requires fewer hours from students than a more creative, coursework-type method.
19. REPORTED: that this issue is currently under consideration by the Faculty and that any further feedback would be appreciated.



(iv) C1 & C2 Papers

20. REPORTED: that the amount of supervision time given for these papers vary between colleges and that this creates an unfair disparity.
21. RESOLVED: that this issue must be addressed at Faculty level in terms of minimal expected provision, and the possibility of the Faculty providing more classes should be looked into immediately, with the aim of achieving this by next term if possible.
22. REPORTED: that some students do not understand what is expected of them for the C2 paper, and feel that a separate introductory lecture would help with this whilst also allowing more teaching time.
23. REPORTED: that there is a general appetite for clarity regarding exams, since results are so crucial in the final year.
24. REPORTED: that some Part II students do not feel that they are welcomed back after their year abroad.
25. RESOLVED: that there should be a general session organized for Part II students, possibly scheduled just after the Oral Exams. The purpose of this would be to welcome students back to the Faculty, and to offer general advice on exams and expectations.

(v) Language Expectations after the Year Abroad

26. REPORTED: that one student has concerns that expectations of language proficiency are too high for students returning from their year abroad.
27. It is noted that there have been discussions with the CALL director about providing optional language exercises to students on their year abroad. It is also suggested that the possibility of writing the year abroad project in a foreign language may focus students more on the language of study.
28. REPORTED: that it was suggested that students should be alerted to the danger of not exposing themselves sufficiently to the native language of their country of residence in the year abroad, for example when teaching English abroad.

Linguistics Part I

(i) Supervision Group Sizes

29. REPORTED: that many students feel supervision groups are too large.
30. It is noted that this is matter of stretching resources, and that in the past students have chosen to have larger supervision groups rather than fewer supervisions overall.

(ii) Introductory Meeting Clashes

31. REPORTED: that the Faculty's Introductory Meeting clashed with some college matriculation ceremonies.
32. RESOLVED: that this feedback will be passed on to the Senior Tutors Committee.



(iii) Supervision Exercises

33. REPORTED: that the current system for supervision exercises means that some students get more time to complete them than others, and that the exercises could be co-ordinated to avoid this.
34. RESOLVED: to pass on this feedback to the Head of Department for DTAL.

(iv) Essay writing guidance

35. REPORTED: that some students have expressed a desire for more guidance on linguistics essay writing, particularly since this subject is not taught at secondary school level.
36. RESOLVED: that there is an example linguistics essay on 'Transkills' (online resource) which students can access. This point will be passed on to Paula Buttery and Brechtje Post.

Linguistics Part II

37. REPORTED: that this position was vacant at the time of the meeting and that a representative should be recruited as soon as possible.

MPhil EuroLit/MPhil Screen Media

38. REPORTED: that some resources are not available on Moodle or in the library.
39. REPORTED: that the library is currently in the process of uploading EuroLit resources to Moodle, though it is noted that the library may not have the copyright permissions to do this for all texts.
40. Students are advised to contact the library about specific instances.

MPhil Linguistics

(i) Title choices for the 2k essays

41. REPORTED: that some students have requested that there are two titles to pick from for the 2000-word essays instead of just one prescribed title. It is noted that this was the case in previous years and that there is scope to reverse this change.

(ii) 4k essay title deadline

42. REPORTED: that some students would prefer a later deadline for title submission for the 4,000 word essay. The current deadline, it was argued, does not provide enough time to explore new subject areas.
43. RESOLVED: that this change might be possible and that the issue will be further investigated by Prof. Jaszczolt.

(iii) Supervision time



- 44. REPORTED: that some students have concerns that the supervision time offered for the 2,000 word essays is too short.
- 45. It is noted that these essays are not supposed to be supervised. The function of these sessions is for lecturers to see an outline of students' work from which they can then judge if it is being structured correctly.
- 46. RESOLVED: that the sessions are renamed as 'consultations' in order to clarify this function.

(iv) Rearranging the Schedule for the Research Methods Seminar

- 47. REPORTED: that students would prefer sessions earlier in the term.
- 48. RESOLVED: to split the sessions, providing more hours in weeks 1 to 4.

(v) Positive Feedback

- 49. REPORTED: that students are generally very happy with the course, enjoy the readings, and liked the General Linguistics Seminar.

PhD

(i) Colour printer for student use

- 50. REPORTED: that many students would like access to a colour printer/photocopier, which is often necessary for Linguistics work.
- 51. RESOLVED: that Ms Bingham will consult with IT about this issue. It is noted that students can currently use the colour printer in the Philosophy section of the RFB, which can be paid for using the University print credit system.

Examination Review

- 52. RECEIVED: a letter from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, Prof. Virgo, seeking the views of Faculties and students on the Examination Review. Students are asked to gather and submit feedback to the SSLC so that a response from the Faculty can be submitted before 21 December 2015.
- 53. REPORTED: that the SSLC would like to receive feedback from students about whether they would like to type their essays in exams. Feedback should be given to the Faculty Office (Adam Cooley, Alex Gibson).

Consultation on Student Workload

- 54. RECEIVED: a letter from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, Prof. Virgo seeking the views of Faculties and students on the matter of student workload. Students are asked to gather and submit feedback to the SSLC so that a response from the Faculty can be submitted before 4 December 2015.
- 55. REPORTED: that there is a discrepancy for MML students who write an optional dissertation on a Linguistics paper that puts them at a disadvantage. This is because MML



optional dissertations are not supposed to have crossover with a previously examined paper, whereas Linguistics dissertations are supposed to be written with prior knowledge of the topic. These students therefore have to take the scheduled paper as well as writing the dissertation and have an increased workload as a result.

56. RESOLVED: that it should be made as clear as possible to students and their Director of Studies that this option involves an increased workload.
57. It is noted that the Faculty could arrange a general session about workload management at the start of the year, and that the SSLC would welcome feedback from students about this.
58. It is noted that the SSLC would also welcome student feedback on the following topics: the coursework/exam balance, vacation guidance, a reading week, the current term length, the current examination process, and student workload in general.
59. RESOLVED: to send the questionnaire received from Education and Student Policy to student representatives for consideration.

Effectiveness of Induction Events

60. REPORTED: that students should be asked to consider the effectiveness of the first-year induction events and to provide feedback to the Committee.
61. REPORTED: that many students feel that the pre-arrival process for successful applicants should be demystified. It is unclear, for example, whether texts on reading lists are mandatory or optional, and this can contribute to the stress of arriving at Cambridge.
62. It is noted that there might be library-led sessions on using reading lists, bibliographies, and references in the future.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 1.35pm.

The next meeting will be held on 23 February, 2016 in room 326.