

Minutes- Staff Graduate Consultative Committee Meeting- Wednesday, 29th April 2015- North Room, Department of International Politics

In Attendance: Dr. Ayla Gol (Chair, Deputy Director of Graduate Studies), Professor Hidemi Suganami (Masters Programme Officer), Abigail Blyth (1st Year PhD representative), Prithvi Hirani (2nd year PhD representative- replacing Lydia Cole), Florian Edelmann (3rd year PhD representative), Tom Marshall (4th year PhD representative), Nguyen Ngoc Le (Jenny) (MA Global Politics representative), Anita Saycell (IS representative- replacing Lilian Stevenson).

1. Welcome

The Chair, Dr. Ayla Gol, welcomed all to the meeting. She asked for volunteers to take minutes, and Tom Marshall agreed to do so.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr. Inanna Hamati-Ataya (Director of Graduate Studies), Nathan Hazlehurst (MA International History rep), Lydia Cole (2nd year PhD rep) and Lilian Stevenson (IS rep).

3. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were circulated beforehand and were confirmed at the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

4.1 A report on moderation (item 6.3). AG reported on behalf of Inanna Hamati-Ataya that overall there was satisfaction with the moderation system that had been introduced for all Masters modules (except the dissertation). Feedback from external examiners had also been positive. A further discussion will take place at the last Departmental Meeting of the academic year.

4.2 A report on the Masters Workroom (item 7.1). This was made available to Masters students from February 2015. Nguyen Ngoc Le (Jenny) reported that the room was being used by Masters students.

4.3 The review of the DCDS system (item 8.2). The SGCC recommended to the Departmental Board that a review of the DCDS system be carried out this year, in parallel with students' own assessment of the system. In the meantime, the DGS was informed unofficially that some significant changes to the terms of the DCDS awards would be made by the University for next year. Further information will be circulated when it is available.

5. Items from the chair

5.1 PhD recruitment (2015-2016). AG read out a report on behalf of IH-A. The DGS and DAEA (Dr. Sergey Radchenko) interviewed 35 applicants (home, EU and Overseas) accepted into the PhD programme (out of a total of 55 applicants). The department offered one EH Carr award to an external applicant who accepted it. 3 additional Interpol applicants made it to the institute list that is being submitted to the University for the DCDS competition. Three DCDS awards are available across the University (which will be awarded on the basis of the applicant's merit), as well as 4 additional awards that have been made available at the last minute, which are likely to be awarded depending on departmental REF performance. If confirmed, this would guarantee one award to Interpol. Additionally, the department made an offer of one ESRC +3 award that is tied to Dr. Elin Royles' research project.

5.2 Masters applications (2015-2016). AG reported that the DGES and DAEA interviewed 7 applicants for one David Davies and one ESRC 1+3 award. Offers were made for both.

5.3 Student evaluation of Masters modules. AG told the meeting that overall, feedback was very positive. The dissertation module received mixed reactions, particularly with regard to the lecture component. Professor Hidemi Suganami (Masters Programme Officer) suggested that the department should seriously reconsider what it offers in the way of RT lectures. It takes a lot of staff effort to organise and deliver these lectures, and if students seem disgruntled, then it might be best not to hold them. NNL suggested that- as an MA student- these lectures are helpful to her, and speaking to fellow students, the main problem was timing- Friday afternoon. HS explained that this was one of the few times that it could be scheduled. Abigail Blyth said that the feeling among her Masters cohort last year was that this is a better idea than the 'core module' that preceded it in the MA programme.

6. Library Matters

6.1 The expiry of the University's SPSS license was raised in the previous meeting (item 5.4). Anita Saycell reported that IS had renewed the license in January. The license key should be available to students.

6.2 Prithvi Hirani enquired about Endnote training, and whether this is something that IS offers, as it is not a part of the University's centrally organised Research Training. Florian Edelmann pointed out that Justa Hopma had organised a session on Endnote training in the department last year in conjunction with IS. He reported that the judgement on this session was mixed. Prithvi and Anita agreed to co-ordinate another training session.

Action: AS & PH

6.3 FE asked for clarification on the proposal to cancel central subscriptions to software and instead put these packages on departmental or individual budgets. AS informed the meeting that the consultation is still ongoing.

6.4 Follow up on 3 day loans from the previous meeting (item 5.3). AB asked for clarification on this issue, and asked for 'Oxford Handbook of National Security' to be put on standard loan. AS said that Lilian Stevenson had not given her any information on this, but she would find out and inform the meeting of the results.

Action: AS

7 Masters Matters

7.1 HS reported on his inquiry into the changes that have been made to centrally organised Research Training modules (item 7.2.1 and item 7.2.2 in previous minutes). He told the meeting that he had received a reply from Reyer Zwiggelaar indicating the changes to RT this year were a response to feedback from students in past years. However, he promised to take any concerns from current students seriously. In future, they hope to involve supervisors more in students' choices of RT modules. HS suggested that some problems this year have emerged because the Faculty of Social Science no longer exists. AG asked whether modules could be organised at the institute level? HS agreed that teaching at institute or departmental level is the best direction to take RT, but regretted that he will not be here next year to implement any such changes.

8 PhD Matters

8.1 Mental health and wellness workshop. Second year PhDs, recently submitted PhDs and FE organised a working group to discuss organising workshops. They are planning three components to these proposals: the first on stress management; the second on prevention, emergency structures and troubleshooting for mental health within the PhD community; and the third for changes to PTTS training to better inform PhD students of how best to support and direct undergraduate students who are suffering from mental ill health. PhD students will submit the proposal to AG, who will then take it to the departmental board.

Action: FE & AG

9 Any Other Business

9.1 FE reported back from the Research Students Consultative Committee. The main issues discussed were the proposals for IS to cut back on 3 packages (Endnote, Nvivo, Minitab), with licenses being bought on departmental or individual levels. A report has been sent to IS. FE and AG agreed to co-ordinate this issue with staff, as staff use these packages, and this consultation is something that they may be interested in feeding into.

Action: FE & AG

9.2 FE raised the issue of PhD students' printer credit. It is not clear whether PhD students still receive an allowance, and whether this is extended for PTTS duties. AG suggested that Elaine Lowe is the best person to ask about this.

Action: FE