

Minutes of Meeting of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee on Wednesday 8th February 2023 at 14.15, held remotely via Teams

Present:

Dr Nathalia Gjersoe, Associate Dean (Education) (Chair)
Dr Gail Forey, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department of Education
Prof Richard Joiner, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department of Psychology
Dr Lucy Noble, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department for Health (to 15.00)
Dr Matteo de Tina, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department of Economics
Dr Karoline von Oppen, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department of Politics,
Languages and International Studies
Dr Oliver Walton, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department of Social and
Sciences

In Attendance:

Miss Suzanne Jacobs, Assistant Registrar (Secretary)
Ms Jo Charles, Curriculum and Academic Staff Development Officer
Mr Chris Goff, Faculty Business Development Manager
Mrs Helen Lofkin, Faculty Marketing Manager (from 15.00)
Dr Sarah Moore, Head of Department of Social and Policy Sciences (for minute ??)
Miss Annika Theilgaard, Student Engagement Manager
Mrs Elise Whittleton, Programmes Manager

Apologies for absence were received from:

Dr Aurelie Charles, Director of MRes Programmes
Ms Maria Clutterbuck, Learning Partnerships Office
Dr James Fern, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department for Health
Dr Andreas Schaeffer, Director of Learning and Teaching, Department of Economics
Dr Florin Bisset, Deputy Director of UG Admissions and Outreach
Mx Blake Walker, Students' Union Community Officer
Mr Zisis Tzifas Kratiras, Student Representative
Mr Jakub Sala, Student Representative

2024 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No member declared any conflict of interest.

2025 - WELCOME

The chair welcomed Ms Charles to her first meeting, noting that Ms Charles has

already been helping teams through their current work on Phase 2/3 PGT CT developments, including involvement in recent workshops with Department for Health colleagues about designing assessments.

Ms Charles also explained that she is working with her colleague, Mrs Osborne, on a current project reviewing Groupwork.

2026 - MINUTES

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on the following date:

- 25th January 2023 (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 70**)

2027 – MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION UPDATES

- a) There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- b) The Committee received updates on Actions (Action Log: **Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 71**), noting that Dr Walton has shared the Department of Social and Policy Sciences new coursework feedback sheet in this Committee's Teams space for information.

2028 – CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- a) Moodle 4.1
The Chair reported that decisions about the allocation of support for the updated Moodle will depend on the outcome of the recent survey, which all staff had been invited to complete.
- b) Unit Evaluations
The Chair indicated that she is anticipating guidance on changes to unit evaluations later this year, noting that a new platform for unit evaluations has been discussed.
- c) Late Penalties for Examinations
The Chair reminded members that there has been a new process for the application of penalties for late examination submission implemented this Semester, with a range of penalties applicable depending on how late the submission was. The Committee noted that there appeared to have been far fewer issues this year.

2029 – STUDENT BUSINESS

There were no students in attendance at this meeting so there were no matters raised for discussion.

2030 - UNIT AND PROGRAMME CHANGES FOR 2023/24

In accordance with [QA4](#), the Committee **approved** the following proposed changes, for implementation in the next academic year, 2023/24 (unless otherwise stated).

- a) Department of Social and Policy Sciences
The suspension of the following units:
 - SP20345 Mental Health (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 72**)
 - SP30263 Ideas About Terrorism (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 73**)

Dr Noble noted that the proposed suspensions resulted from the fact that the specialist member of staff is no longer available and the proposal confirmed that there was no negative impact on students. The Committee noted that in the future, through one of the principles of CT that team-teaching is encouraged, the need to suspend units in these circumstances should hopefully more often be avoided. The Chair reminded colleagues that they need to be mindful to design new units with more flexibility but noted the tension with also wanting to offer students cutting-edge research-led units that differentiated our programmes from those at other universities.

- SP30364 Death in the Criminal Justice System (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 74**)
- SP30361 Border Criminology (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 75**)

In response to a query whether the units should have been withdrawn, rather than suspended, Dr Walton confirmed that these units may well be re-instated in the future.

New unit, to be added as an option in the final year of all SPS programmes: The Sociology of Experts and Evidence (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 76**)

Dr de Tina noted that there are three lecturers delivering the unit and there will be a single 100% coursework assessment. It would be useful to know what form this will take and how this will be managed in the context of the team-teaching. Dr Walton agreed to ask colleagues what their plans are and it was agreed therefore that final approval would be subject to Chair's action approval once this further information has been provided.

Members of the Committee noted that the new unit was intended to be offered as an option for programmes outside of the Department but that there appeared not to be any subsequent proposals from the other Departments to add this unit to their option lists. In discussion, it was noted that there appeared to be no prompt from within Curriculum Planner for other Departments to take this action once a new unit is approved. While at the initial stages affected departments are expected to be alerted and potentially included in the Peer development team review within Curriculum Planner, it was noted that this is not necessarily taking place. A discussion about where responsibility lies when a new unit in another department is intended to be added to a programme of study in another department. The Secretary confirmed that as in the past, this is the responsibility of the home department for the programme into which the unit is to be added, and this is probably intended to be undertaken by the Director of Studies for each affected programme. It was noted that the process for achieving this is very complicated and labour intensive within Curriculum Planner and that Directors of Studies may not be the most appropriate people to undertake this work.

b) [Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies](#)

- Changes to PL30569 The Post-Franco Party Political System in Spain (including title change to Contemporary Spain: Perspectives and Challenges; changes to Content, Learning outcomes and Assessment) (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 77**)

Dr Walton noted that the unit will now be team-taught. The rationale refers to the updates making the content more attractive to BSc IMML students. Dr von Oppen confirmed, however, that other Spanish students will continue to find the unit of interest.

- Suspension of PL30882 The Disunited Kingdom: Devolution and the end of British Politics? (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 78**)

Dr von Oppen confirmed that there is no other member of staff able to deliver this unit in 2023/24. The Committee noted that there is an expectation that it will be offered again with effect from 2024/25.

2031 – RENEWAL OF STUDENT EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS

Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies

In accordance with [QA37](#), the Committee **approved** the proposed renewal of the following agreements:

- a) HEC, Montreal, Canada for 5 years with effect from 2023/24 (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 79**)
- b) San Andres Business School, Buenos Aires, Argentina for 5 years with effect from 2023/24 (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 80**)
- c) PUC (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile), Santiago, Chile for 5 years with effect from 2023/24 (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 81**)

2032 – NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

Department of Social and Policy Sciences

In accordance with [QA3](#), the Committee considered a Stage 2 proposal for the establishment of the MSc Criminology for implementation with effect from 2023/24 (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 82**).

Dr Moore attended the meeting for this item of business.

Dr Gjersoe noted that it was useful to see the APC comments and responses as part of the paperwork.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Dr Moore confirmed that she had discussed the proposed intensive teaching blocks with the University's Timetabling team who confirmed that there are no issues from their point of view. A question was none-the-less raised in relation to arrangements for students who miss an intensive teaching block.
- It was noted that while the proposal includes the request for additional administrative resource there is no guarantee that exclusive additional support for this programme would be approved.
- Dr Moore confirmed that there will be no teaching shared with undergraduate

programmes.

- The Committee agreed that it would probably be preferable for the reference to assessment via examination in one unit only in the Assessment section of the Programme Specification to be removed or reworded so that there is flexibility in the future.
- It was confirmed that the exit awards do not need separate learning outcomes.
- The Committee noted that word limits are included in the new unit proposals' assessment section, and that this is useful information, but this level of detail is not likely to be included in the SAMIS/student-facing information.
- It was also noted that the stated word limits include references, which may be unusual. Dr Moore confirmed this is a common approach in SPS and therefore would prefer to retain this consistent approach.
- The Committee noted that in the future the APC has recommended the Department consider adding a placement variant. The Chair advised, however, that the addition of a Practice Track is likely to be more appropriate to consider going forward.
- The Committee noted that there are a wide range of options proposed and concerns were raised about the viability of so many options being offered. Dr Moore confirmed that there is sufficient resource but that options may not run if fewer than 10 students choose them. She also explained that the proposed Independent Research Essay unit would allow students to focus on their area of interest if an optional unit they had intended to complete does not run.
- In response to a question raised about the proposed assessment for Doing Criminology Research which will be taught intensively in the first 4 weeks of the programme, Dr Moore explained that, following experience with their Year 1 undergraduate teaching in the past few years, this unit has been designed to have elements of the final assessment in each week leading to the final submission in week 4.
- Dr Moore confirmed that part-time students would need to attend the intensive teaching blocks on a full-time basis, and that this will be clearly explained to them in advance.

The Committee **agreed** that the proposal should be forwarded for consideration by the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC).

Mr Goff reported that a number of Heads of Department had contacted him recently to discuss the possibility of the addition of placements to MSc programmes. He reported that this has been discussed with the Placements team and it has been noted that there are difficulties in securing short-term placement opportunities for Masters students but greater potential for securing Practice Track opportunities, which can be undertaken by groups of students. It was agreed that it would be useful for Mrs Richards, Faculty Business Engagement Manager, and Mr Gore, Faculty Placements Manager, to attend a future meeting to provide more information.

ACTION: invite Mrs Richards and Mr Gore to a future meeting.

2033 – FUTURE SCANNING (Standing item)

There were no items for discussion at this meeting.

2034 - ACCREDITATION

Department of Psychology

The Committee noted that the British Psychological Society had approved the proposed Action Plan and reconfirmed their accreditation of the MSc Applied Forensic Psychology with Counselling (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 83**).

2035 – CHAIR’S ACTION

The Committee noted the following matter approved by Chair’s action:

- Material change to the recruitment information for the BSc Social Work and Applied Social Studies (requiring students to have a driving licence by March of Year 1).

2036 – FACULTY COMMITTEES

The Committee received the following Departmental LTQC minutes:

- Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies 28.9.22 and 18.11.22 (**Paper FHLTQC 22/23 – 84**)

2037 – UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

There were no minutes of the University Committees to note at this meeting.

2038 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Chat-GPT

The Committee noted that in addition to the work underway in the CLT (note the recent Blog post) and at the Academic Integrity Working Group, some departments are beginning to consider the implications of Chat-GPT across all assessments and in terms of their teaching. The Chair suggested that it would be useful for all departments to begin to consider this important matter.

b) Feedback Deadlines for Coursework

Members of the Committee noted that in particular for those departments with high student cohort numbers (eg Psychology and Economics) colleagues are struggling to be able to complete their marking so that students receive feedback within the usual expected 15 working days. This has been causing a lot of stress, potential for mistakes to be made and less helpful and comprehensive feedback being made available to students. It was agreed that this is unsustainable.

It was suggested that some changes might be made to the methods of assessment currently used but that also, an increase to a 20-day period in which to complete marking might be helpful. It was also noted that the increase in team-taught units introduces further levels of calibration and moderation which take time and are further factors contributing to the difficulty in completing marking in 15 working days.

The Committee noted that QA16 allows departments to inform students when it is anticipated that feedback might not be available within the expected 15 working day period. However, it was also noted that unless students are warned of this well enough in advance, their expectation has already been set at the 15 working day point.

The Chair recommended that departments think strategically about large units that predictably struggle to meet the 15-day marks turnaround time. Where this could be anticipated in advance, departments may choose to tell students from the start of the unit that the marks turn-around will be 20 days, and (importantly) plan for these deadlines to be earlier in the semester to ensure feedback can be returned in time for it to be useful for any subsequent assessment.

It was noted that allowing more time for marking to be completed could have an impact on the time available for the preparation of results for Unit Boards of Examiners and therefore that it would be necessary to bring submission deadlines back to give more time in advance of the deadline for BEUs for marking to take place and for the input of marks into SAMIS and the preparation of unit reports for the BEUs.

c) Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting (15th March 2023) would take place in-person.