

**SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
STUDENT RECRUITMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

Thursday 24 February 2005

In attendance:

Professor Peter Robb (Chair)

Professor Tom Tomlinson

Mr Terry Harvey

Ms Lesley Waldron

Professor Michael Hutt

Mrs Sue Yates

Mr Ian Fielding

Apologies:

Mr Andrew Keeble

Mr Michael Sherry

Professor Stephen Chan

Ms Lina Hatami

Ms Kavita Meelu

10. Minutes of the Meeting Thursday 28 October 2004

Deposits (minute 2:a):

Terry Harvey noted that the final paragraph was contradictory and action point should read that we should aim to implement deposits

Membership of SRAG (minute 3):

Sue Yates noted that she had been omitted from the circulation list of SRAG and should be included.

11. Matters Arising

Deposits (minute 2.a):

All were in agreement that it would be too late to introduce a deposits scheme for postgraduate courses for the forthcoming academic year, but should be considered for 2006. The Committee noted deposits for 2006 would need to be fully investigated by July so that information could be included in the postgraduate prospectus. It was agreed that the introduction of deposits needed to be looked into in greater detail, as a matter of urgency, and that it could not wait for the appointment of a new Head of Recruitment and Admissions. Tom Tomlinson suggested that a form of on-line payment would be the most appropriate method of payment for any deposits scheme, which the SRC agreed on. Sue Yates noted that as IFCELS already operates a deposits system that they should be consulted as well as Graham Appleby for the implications on the Finance Office.

Action: Terry Harvey to fully investigate the introduction of a deposits scheme by July 2005, possibly in consultation with the new Head of Recruitment and Admissions.

English Language Requirements (minute 2.b):

The Committee noted that the English Waiver rule had been approved by the LTPC. There was again some concern over the possible discriminatory nature of English Language waiver for certain overseas institutions. Sue Yates questioned whether this had been circulated to Admissions Tutors and noted that William Hetherington (IFCELS) was compiling a file of relevant cases. The Committee discussed the need to introduce an IELTS test at the end of pre-sessional courses for students and concluded that this would be discussed at the SRC meeting in October 2005.

Action: TH to send English Language Documentation to TT. IELTS testing to be discussed in October 2005.

12. Report on Admissions

Terry Harvey reported on the current position of applications/offers for the 2005 academic year, particularly the rise in applications and offers which was discussed by the group. It was questioned whether the increased fees for undergraduate courses in 2006 was a factor in the rise of applications for 2005, especially as the increase has been at UK/EU level and not international. An increase in mature applicants could be one of the factors for the rise in applications, as they may be applying ahead of the new 2006 fee structure. Peter Robb asked if there was a way in which we could assess the number of mature applicants compared with the last academic year. Concern was also expressed over the number of current applicants that may defer for 2006 as they deferred students would still qualify for the lower fee structure. Michael Hutt requested clarification over increase in number of rejections, was this due to increased efficiency on the part of the Admissions Tutors and Admissions process? Sue Yates reported that there has been an unexpected rise in applications for the undergraduate foundation course. This could be explained by the increase in recruitment activity by IFCELS during the start of the 2004/5 academic year (including a representative based in Tokyo), as well as a high quality academic destination list of the foundation students last year. Terry Harvey requested an update of IFCELS students that enrolled onto SOAS courses. It was noted that the number of Postgraduate offers appeared to be reduced, but that this was not a cause for concern given the timing of the latest statistics available and problems with processing applications for the LLM.

Action: Registry to establish number of applications from mature students for the current year compared to the 2004/5 application cycle. Has the increase in fees for 2006 had an effect on mature applicants applying for the 2005 year?

Action: Registry to clarify reason behind increased number of rejections

Action: SY to supply TH with information on IFCELS students progressing to SOAS

13. Study Abroad: matters for consideration

- a. Lesley Waldron reported on the current issues regarding the Study Abroad scheme, including standard assessment for Terms 2&3 students which have caused a number of problems this academic year. There had been some concerns expressed by Study Abroad students (as well as partner institutions) that under the current standard assessment procedures, students did not have any academic requirements after the end of Term 2. It was proposed by Dr Daud Ali (the Study Abroad Academic Co-ordinator) that this could be overcome by setting additional course-work or requiring the students to attend exams. Peter Robb noted that this matter has been discussed by the LTPC and it had been decided that students here for Terms 2&3 only would complete a 3000 word 'Study Project' per course. This would be in addition to the current standard assessment of a 3000 word essay per course. Peter Robb explained that the proposal had been sent to Faculties for their approval and if approved by Faculties he would take Chairs Action.
- b. Tom Tomlinson suggested that all Study Abroad students could take short language courses during Term 3 and the SRC expressed interest in this suggestion. However Lesley Waldron raised the issue that not all Study Abroad students may wish to take a language, but it was agreed by the group that this suggestion could be explored further.
- c. Lesley Waldron also reported on the accommodation issues faced by both SRO and Study Abroad students coming to SOAS. It was explained that the current process of applying for accommodation is both cumbersome and complicated and was not beneficial to the students. It was suggested that the system of applying for accommodation should be centralised within the SRO however there were

some concerns over additional administration duties for the SRO. Sue Yates noted that IFCELS already operates a centralised accommodation application service to their students. It was suggested that IFCELS and the SRO could investigate co-operation in the placing of IFCELS and Study Abroad students.

- d. Lesley Waldron also asked that the School considers introducing official agreements between SOAS and Study Abroad partner institutions. At present no official agreements exist but it was felt by the SRO that this should be explored in light of increased promotional work in the US. Peter Robb suggested that this should be discussed with Professor Lisa Croll who has responsibility for institutional agreements

Action: Lesley Waldron to discuss the possibility of Language Summer Schools with Michael Hutt

Action: Lesley Waldron to investigate co-operation between the IFCELS Accommodation Officer and SRO with regards to Study Abroad accommodation.

Action: Lesley Waldron to discuss the introduction of institutional agreements with our Study Abroad partners

14. Student Recruitment Strategy

- a. Lesley Waldron presented the overview of the Student Recruitment Strategy and asked for comments on short term recommendations and it was agreed by the group that a more focused approach was required. Sue Yates noted that the School should keep a closer eye on key markets especially in light of recent global events that could affect recruitment within these regions e.g. Asian economic down-turn, SARS, Asian Tsunami. Tom Tomlinson questioned the point on market research, expressly, who was to undertake this market research. Tom Tomlinson suggested that the SRO could advise departments on demand and potential for academic courses. Sue Yates agreed with this point and suggested that both IFCELS and the SRO could provide more detailed feedback to departments on overseas markets. Peter Robb suggested that new programme proposals should be passed through the SRO for comment and to advise on overseas potential for any new courses.
- b. Terry Harvey questioned the point on process management, mentioning that this was a statement rather than an action.
- c. Tom Tomlinson questioned the point on setting targets at an earlier stage and whether this was realistically possible as it is difficult to set targets for individual courses. However it was confirmed by Peter Robb that the School has set global targets and Lesley Waldron could obtain these from Graham Appleby.

Action: Lesley Waldron to obtain global recruitment targets from Graham Appleby and report back to the group to feed back whether additional information is required.

Action: Proposals for new courses to be sent to the SRO for feedback and comment on suitability within both Home and International markets. Lesley Waldron to raise this with the Head of Learning and Teaching Strategy.

15. Admissions Policy

Tom Tomlinson reported that the Admissions Policy was being put together, topics were identified by the SRO and that Mr Nick Page, Deputy Registrar, had provided a 10,000 word undergraduate admissions policy (based on other institutions admissions policies including UCL, KCL, Cambridge, Southampton and Bristol). However it was felt that Mr Page's document was too long so Tom Tomlinson had produced a shorter, more concise document that would be more suitable for the QAA. The final document would need to be approved by September so comments would be required as soon as possible. It was agreed that clarification was needed concerning which members of staff needed to comment on the

working document. Peter Robb noted that both Karen Clarke and Mandy Bentham would need to comment on the document, in addition to the committee, however it was suggested that Jan Airey would be able to confirm which staff members would need to comment and the process for approval. Peter Robb noted that the final document would need to be approved and that the next LTPC meeting is on 13 May 2005.

Action: The current shortened version of the Admissions Policy to be sent to Jan Airey for confirmation of which members of staff are required to comment on the document (to include Karen Clarke and Mandy Bentham). A final document should be presented to the LTPC on 13 May for approval. All members of the committee to return comments to Lesley Waldron and Tom Tomlinson before the end of Term 2.

16. Report to Executive Board

Peter Robb reminded the committee that a retrospective report on the activity is required by the next meeting and a summary of plans for 2005/6 and implications should also be submitted.

17. Any Other Business

None

18. Date of the next meeting

9am, Thursday 26 May 2005, Room 100