

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

MINUTES

Thursday 26 May 2005

Professor Peter Robb (Chair)	
Professor Tom Tomlinson	Professor Michael Hutt
Professor Stephen Chan	Mr Terry Harvey
Mrs Sue Yates	Mr Michael Sherry
Ms Lesley Waldron (Secretary)	Mr Andrew Keeble*
Ms Lina Hatami*	
Ms Kavita Meelu*	

In attendance:

Mr Nicholas Page
Ms Kate Singleton

* Those marked with an asterisk were unable to attend

19. The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 24 February 2005 were **APPROVED**.

20. Matters Arising

- i. *Minute 11: English language requirements (also minute 2b)*
Sue Yates expressed concern regarding the suggested testing of students at the end of pre-sessional courses and the Committee discussed issues relating to methods of reporting on under achieving students and it was **AGREED** that this issue would be taken up by the group working on improvements to the Personal Tutor system. The issue of English language requirements will be discussed again by this Committee in October 2005.
- ii. *Minute 13: Study Abroad accommodation*
Sue Yates noted that the new Accommodation Officer had started in IFCELS and that her job description had been reworded to include dealing with accommodation issues outside the department. The Student Recruitment Office will meet with the officer shortly to discuss assistance with accommodation for Study Abroad Students.
- iii. *Minute 14: Student Recruitment Strategy*
In response to a query from Michael Sherry Peter Robb clarified that the targets set by the Finance Office are global targets for projections up to ten years in the future and that recruitment targets are agreed by the Recruitment Action Group.

21. Report on Admissions

- i. *IFCELS*
Sue Yates noted that acceptance of places on the ICC course is up 50% on the same date last year and it is anticipated that they will meet or exceed current targets. Concern was expressed that there may not be adequate space for teaching increased numbers. Tom Tomlinson suggested that it would be appropriate to bring IFCELS into global discussions of space planning for the year ahead.

ii. *Undergraduate*

It was noted that all departments are likely to meet their targets for this year but that there may be a danger of over recruitment and exceeding HEFCE funded numbers. There was some discussion of the flexibility possible in confirmation and that the introduction of top-up fees in 2006 may result in a larger than average number of deferrals. Most undergraduate programmes are now closed to UK/EU applicants, and it was AGREED to continue with the current arrangements.

iii. *Postgraduate*

Terry Harvey reported a 6% increase in the numbers of offers made by the end of April, in comparison to a similar point last year. The new policy of decline by default had resulted in 350 offer holders being taken out of the system and over 70 more confirmed acceptances. There was discussion of the problems created by the bunching of applications around School vacations and exam period which result in a backlog in application processing. Possible solutions included devolving offer making power to admissions officers or ensuring admissions tutors examine applications in the admissions office rather than sending them out.

iv. *Other admissions issues*

TH noted that the review of overseas qualifications for postgraduates was underway. The Committee discussed the implementation of premium fees for Home/EU students. TT suggested that this would cut time spent on deciding the fee status of students.

22. Visa information Sheet

The Committee discussed the wording of the document at Appendix C. It was noted that the wording of this information sheet was causing concern amongst students required to take pre-session courses and that a possible solution might be to have a two-step offer letter as in IFCELS. It was agreed that the paragraph on the ECNR to be clarified.

Action: Terry Harvey to clarify wording of information sheet

23. Admissions Policy

The approval of the Admissions Policy was noted. Terry Harvey noted that the version presented to the Committee was not the final version, but that all suggested amendments were on the web-based version.

24. Schedule of Activity 2005-2006

Lesley Waldron presented the paper at Appendix E outlining the planned overseas recruitment events with the comment that this was still subject to change. Sue Yates suggested the planned event in April in Thailand may not be appropriate timing.

25. Access Agreement

Lesley Waldron informed the Committee that procedures were in place to establish a Working Group as required in the Agreement's action plan. It was noted that the new Head of Admissions and Recruitment will lead this group, and the first meeting of this group will be after his arrival at SOAS. The reporting structure for this Group was discussed and it was suggested that the Student Recruitment Committee should be expanded to cover Admissions issues.

26. Agents Business Plan

Lesley Waldron presented a business proposal outlining the case for the use of agents which was received positively by the committee. It was AGREED that this would be submitted to Resources Committee at the next stage together with the finalised agents' agreement. LW commented that this agreement was still being redrafted. The Committee AGREED that agents should be fully briefed on all areas of the School, to ensure applications are not too concentrated in certain subject areas.

Action: LW to finalise agents' agreement in consultation with CeFIMs and School lawyers

27. Bloomsbury Consortium

Lesley Waldron commented on the activities of the group discussing collaboration on international recruitment issues as part of the Bloomsbury Consortium. A paper was tabled that had been presented to the Heads of Colleges of the Bloomsbury Consortium.

28. Report to Executive Board on Student Recruitment Activity

LW presented the report to EB for comments. It was suggested that more detail was required before it is sent on. Michael Sherry reminded LW that the new web-first policy should be included in the publications section.

Action: LW to amend report and send to Chair for submission to EB

29. Update on Scholarships

LW presented figures from the Scholarships Officer on applications for SOAS bursaries and scholarships. The committee discussed the benefits of scholarships for recruitment and the possibility that the new Development Office will attract further funding.

30. Strategic Developments 2006-2007

The points in Appendix J were noted, and it was agreed that these would be discussed in further details at the Committee meeting in October. Among those points to highlight was the development of an accommodation guarantee for international students, which LW noted is essential to increasing the proportion of overseas students at undergraduate level. The issue of developing targeted scholarships as a recruitment tool was also discussed.

Action: A group including the new Head of Admissions to be formed to discuss these issues in detail over the summer

31. Any other business

Terry Harvey commented on the recently circulated report on feedback from study abroad students. The Committee AGREED that this should be sent to the next Learning and Teaching Policy Committee.