

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

Minutes

Thursday 22 February 2007

Professor Peter Robb (Chair)

Professor Stephen Chan

Mr Terry Harvey

Professor Mike Hutt

Ms Sharon Page

Mrs Sue Yates

Mr Michael Sherry

Professor Tom Tomlinson

Mr David Atkins

**1. Minutes of the meeting of 2 November 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2006 were approved without amendment.

**2. Undergraduate Admissions**

The Committee received a report detailing the undergraduate application numbers and offers for 2007 entry with a comparison from the previous year. It was noted that overall application numbers looked healthy and that most departments were expecting to meet their targets.

It was agreed that the following programmes which have a limited number of places still available will continue to consider late applications but that these courses should not be made available in UCAS extra:

*Near and Middle East programmes  
With Geography programmes (run with KCL)*

Offers should continue to be made on the following programmes in order to meet target numbers and these programmes should also be made available in UCAS Extra:

*Faculty of Arts & Humanities Programmes:*

*Music*

*Study of Religions*

*Faculty of Languages & Cultures Programmes:*

*African*

*Linguistics*

*South Asia*

*South East Asia*

**3. Postgraduate Admissions**

The Committee received statistics showing the breakdown of applications and offers for postgraduate entry for 2007.

The need for Faculties to be given access to applicant data through Unit-e was highlighted, so that they would be able to use the information to contact applicants as a way of improving recruitment.

It was agreed that there was an urgent need to give convenors and admission tutors access to information about overseas qualifications and their equivalence. It was agreed that all selectors should be given access to the on-line NARIC guide as a matter of urgency.

It was questioned what efforts were being made to promote recruitment to the so called earmarked programmes in Globalisation, Media, Translation and Gender Studies. Michael Sherry outlined the type of marketing activities that were ongoing and reported that meetings with a wide number of departments had been taking place to identify specific marketing needs and actions.

It was agreed that there would need to be a more strategic approach to the Schools recruitment marketing activity which would be led by the development of the School strategic objectives.

#### **4. Scholarships**

The Scholarships Committee had been discussing how scholarships were currently being used and had been debating the question about whether the award of more but smaller amounts, rather than full or near-full awards, would prove a more effective use of funds and make SOAS more attractive to applicants. The Committee received a paper outlining the take-up of SOAS scholarships for 2006/07 and some of the reasons why students declined awards.

Views were expressed that scholarships must be used effectively and be of enough value to make a difference to support students, and that the School should be targeting the award of scholarships more exactly. The paper showed that in a number of cases students who were offered scholarships still decide to go elsewhere.

It was suggested that even the offer of a relatively small amount might make a difference in situations where students holding offers from a number of institutions would likely accept an offer which some funding attached to it. It was further suggested that scholarships could be targeted as a recruitment strategy, for example to target particular programmes, types of student or particular countries as a way of aiding recruitment. Scholarships need to be part of a package of recruitment enticements.

It was suggested that it would be useful to know what percentage of income is spent on scholarships by our competitor institutions. And that it was clear that more funds need to be found to increase the scholarship provision.

It was agreed that the next postgraduate prospectus should highlight scholarship opportunities more fully.

It was agreed that a working group convened by the Academic Registrar and made up from representatives of each panel along with registry marketing and recruitment officers, to consider what strategy should be adopted for the future use of the School's scholarships.

#### **5. Use of Recruitment Agents**

The Committee discussed the merits of using recruitment agents as a way of improving the Schools recruitment activity. It was noted that a strategy would need to be developed to ensure that using agents would make a clear difference to recruitment. This would need to be in place in time for the 2008 entry recruitment cycle.

## **6. Student Records System Development**

It was reported that a proposal was going to the Information Strategy Group that the development of on-line systems within Unit-e would be focused on postgraduate admissions. The project would focus on the development of on-line enquires and applications through the Unit-e system. It is hoped to have these new systems in place by the autumn in time for the 2008 admission cycle.

A review of enrolment procedures will be undertaken with the aim of improving enrolment and reducing the length of queuing for the coming September and work on developing on-line registration will then follow for the next year.

## **7. UCAS Tariff**

Mike Hutt presented a paper detailing data showing UCAS tariff points for students entering into programmes in the Faculty of Languages and Cultures for 2005/6 entry (the data for the 2006/7 entry from UCAS was not yet available). The data indicated that generally applicants achieved far higher tariff scores than the offers they were made for entry.

It was agreed that when UCAS made the 2006/7 entry data available further analysis of the entry tariff scores should be undertaken and comparisons made with the standard entry requirements of competitor institutions. This information would help departments when considering the tariff scores for entry onto programmes in the future.

## **8. Web Development Update**

The Committee received a report from Michael Sherry on the progress of the Web Development Project. A timetable for the launch of the project was circulated.

It was reported that the build of the new site was well under way. Content migration was scheduled to begin in early March and the training for content editors would also start then.

The new web-site is expected to go live at the end of May; however the existing web-site will remain available as a backup so there will be a need to ensure that both versions are updated for the period of overlap. It was noted how important it would be to ensure that the new site is maintained and updated effectively, which had not always been the case in the past. The point was made that web editors and content managers would need to be resourced properly to ensure that the web-site was continually updated.

It was reported that the new undergraduate prospectus for 2008 entry was due to be published on 12 April and that there would be a number of new design features including a smaller size. Discussions had also taken place about the need for a dedicated postgraduate research prospectus and it was felt that the current postgraduate prospectus did not fully represent the research opportunities on offer. It was agreed that a separate research prospectus would be welcomed.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Thursday 31 May at 9.00am in Rm 100

