School of Oriental and African Studies  
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences  
Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee  

Thursday 16th November, 2006

MINUTES

Members:

Ms Sonja Ruehl  
Prof. Robert Ash  
Dr Jonathan Di John*  
Dr Sanzhu Zhu*  
Dr Charles Tripp*  
Dr. Richard Mead  
Dr. Graham Smith

(Associate Dean – Postgraduate)  
(Associate Dean – Undergraduate)  
Development Studies Department representative  
The School of Law representative  
Politics Department representative  
Financial and Management Studies Department representative  
Economics Department representative

In Attendance:

Mr Nicholas Page - Deputy Registrar  
Ms Emily Huns - Head of Service and Careers  
Ms Wangari Muoria-Sal - Committee Secretary

*= not present – apologies received

1. Minutes:  
The minutes of the last meeting held Thursday 12th October, 2006 were APPROVED with correction to ‘Members Present’; Dr Graham Smith having wrongly been described as not having been Present.

2. Matters Arising:  
Item 4: New Postgraduate Assessment Guidelines – it was noted that the new assessment guidelines had been adopted for marking all assessment material for all students starting in the 06/07 session or later. They do not apply to marking the work of continuing students who started before the current 06/07 session and who were re-sitting or repeating coursework; who should be marked under the previous assessment guidelines. The Faculty office would identify students who fall into this ‘old’ category, for the benefit of academics marking their work.

Item 5: Programme Approval Procedure for session 2006-07: The Associate Dean PG reported that having checked through the new programme approval procedure forms, it was noted that the needs of Defims in seeking approval of distance-learning programmes, which needed to be done through the London University EISA system as well as through SOAS, had not been taken into account. This meant that as things stood, two different sets of programme approval forms needed to be compiled for these programmes and the FLTC agreed that this should be unnecessary. The Deputy Registrar of Distance Learning had prepared a form (which was tabled – see attached) to highlight those areas required by EISA but which do not appear in the SOAS form. FLTC noted the form but suggested that the converse also applied, that is, that the EISA form did not meet all of SOAS requirements for information. FLTC suggested that the Deputy Registrar of Defims met with the Head of LTU to agree a generic form for distance-learning programmes only, which included both the requirements of SOAS and EISA. When the process is available online, an ‘either/or’ programme approval route can easily be structured in.

Item 6: L&SS Enrolment stats:  
The Associate Dean PG reported that the enrolment figures for Distance Learning programmes in DeFiMS for the calendar year 2006 showed over 400 new students recruited, which was a 27% overall increase over 2005.

Item 8: Examination Arrangements for MA Area Studies Dissertations:  
The Associate Dean PG reported that the Faculty Board had APPROVED the proposal that dissertations done by Area Studies students which had been supervised by a discipline-based academic in Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, should be sent to the relevant External Examiner related to the major discipline

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rather than the Area Studies Examiner (the case was raised by Economics). (AD to discuss with Languages and Cultures).

3. Assessment Guidelines:
The generic documents summarising Assessment Guidelines for the Faculty of Law and Social Science were CONSIDERED. Recommendations to amend the MA/MSc guidelines from 44% to 0-44% were NOTED. FLTC were happy to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to Faculty Board for all three Assessment Guidelines:
- BA/BSc students (excluding LLB assessment guidelines, which were also tabled and noted)
- MA/MSc students
- MA/MSc students – Tutorial Presentations (prepared by the Associate Dean – PG) with amendment to read as follows:
  ‘Tutorial presentations will be awarded a percentage grade which will count as up to 10% of your final course grade’.

MA/MSc Tutorial Presentation:
It was NOTED that FLTC also endorsed the suggestion made to adopt the same set of tutorial presentation guidelines for LLB and BA/BSc students. FLTC AGREED for AD to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to Faculty Board.

4. UG Programme Reviews for 2005-06:
The following Undergraduate Programme Annual Reviews were NOTED.
- BA Development Studies and x
- BSc Development Economics
- BSc Economics
- BA Economics and x
- BA Politics
- BA Law and x
- LLB

Overall these were generally positive, but key issues highlighted were:
- problems of EAA teaching, where we had made progress but further improvement was needed
- Concerns over size of classes and space availability
- responding to feedback from Externals and Student Evaluation of Courses.

The Economics representative commented on Appendix D.4 BA Economics and another subject – noting the problem of weighting of the Economics versus the Language component of these degrees. Because students who took a Language and Economics degree were required to have at least 9 units in their language degree, out of a total of 16 units, this could endanger the Economics designation of the degree as the students could lack the relevant quantitative and mathematical background.

FLTC noted that an opposite case had been made from the other Faculty, i.e. that final-year study should include at least one Language course. This would aggravate the problem noted above.

With the exception of the Graduate Diploma programme review, which would be presented at the next FLTC. FLTC NOTED the comments made and Associate Dean UG would present a Summary Report to the Faculty Board.
5. Careers Service Annual Report:
The Head of Careers presented the Careers Service Annual Report to the FLTC members. It was NOTED that, in order to help prospective and current students, the Careers Office were working on improving the responses received from alumni on destinations after graduation, which would also help towards the collection of information on SOAS alumni job titles. It was also NOTED that the Head of Careers had been invited to attend the Faculty Board to discuss which particular job areas should be covered.

FLTC NOTED the Careers Annual Report, and AGREED that the AD should forward it to Faculty Board to NOTE.
FLTC also welcomed the recent initiatives described, such as that on ‘volunteering’, and the good levels of student participation achieved.

6. LLM Programme Proposal:
Part 2 of the LLM Programme Proposal was not able to be considered, as the form was not fully completed. It was also NOTED that Part 1 of the Programme Proposal should have been attached. It was therefore AGREED that the LLM Programme Proposal would be presented at the next FLTC meeting in term 2.

7. Any Other business:

Postgraduate Course weighting amendment:

7.1 The changes to the weighting of the following Politics postgraduate essays were NOTED:

Comparative Politics of the Middle East – from 17%-17%-17% to 10% - 20% - 20%
International Politics of the Middle East - from 17%-17%-17% to 10% - 20% - 20%

It was further noted that these would require double-marking since the cumulative coursework assessment percentage is in each case 50%.

7.2 Associate Dean PG reported that there were on-going discussions to speed up the admissions process. Possibilities under consideration include that:

- Departments would be more responsible for making decisions, without having to make a case to the Associate Dean. Registry may be enabled to make offers to applicants holding given qualifications, according to a pre-agreed list, without having to go to Admissions Tutors.

- Admissions tutors would have direct access to the World of Learning, NARIC or similar sources, online, plus a list of ‘rogue institutions’.

- Admissions tutors would handle applications within the Admissions Office, rather than files being circulated round SOAS buildings.

- An on-line admissions process be introduced which would enable Conditional Offers to be made more easily.

It was also NOTED that IFCELS were keen to make 2 year offers to their students, in which the first year would be the Foundation Diploma, with students accepted onto Masters programmes if achieving acceptable standards. FLTC noted that the Faculty’s Admissions Tutors would need to have a role in accepting students onto LASS Masters programmes.

8. The next Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee is scheduled for 11th January, 2006.