These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the committee.

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

Thursday 8th January, 2009
9.00am in Room 116

MINUTES

Members: Representing
Ms Sonja Ruehl Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching, Law and Social Sciences Faculty (Chair)
Dr Damien Tobin Defims
Dr Mike Jennings Development Studies Department
Dr Dic Lo Economics
Mr Nick Foster Law
Dr Dafydd Fell Politics and International Studies

Student representatives:
Ms Claudia Brinkman (Postgraduate)
Ms Arianna Tassinari (Undergraduate)

In Attendance:
Mr Nick Page - Head of Registry
Mr Mark Humphrey - Learning and Teaching Services Manager, Learning and Teaching Unit
Mrs Wangari Muoria-Sal - Committee Secretary

23. Minutes:
The minutes of the last meeting held 13th November, 2008 were APPROVED.

24. Matters Arising:
24.1 Minute item 11.2 referring to item 2.7 of the previous minutes. FLTC NOTED that the amendments to Programme Reviews for MSc Finance and Financial Law and MSc Politics for 06/07 were still outstanding.

ACTION: WM to follow-up with Defims and Politics representatives.

24.2 Minute item 11.3 referring to item 2.8.1 of the previous minutes. FLTC NOTED response received from Examinations Officer that for the first time this year the appointment of PhD students as invigilators would be the responsibility of the Exam Office. Procedures were also being reviewed and there would be briefing sessions organised for the Chief Invigilators to remind them of what was and was not permitted.

24.4 Minute item 11.4 referring to item 3.1.1. With regards to alternate FLTC membership. It was NOTED that according to the School’s Standing Orders, it was not possible for full FLTC members to be substituted by colleagues. Another member of the Department could be asked to stand in and attend in place of e.g. a sick FLTC member, but would be ‘in attendance’ only. The AD therefore emphasized that in order to make sure the committee were always quorate, it was important that all nominated members attend the FLTC meetings held twice a term.

24.5 In addition FLTC AGREED to pursue the request from the Head of Registry to have full membership status for all three Faculties, which the FLTC fully supports.

24.6 WM to make enquiries with the Pro-Directors office and report back to the next FLTC.

25. Postgraduate DeFIMS (CeDep) Course Proposals and Amendments:
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The four CeDep courses Appendix A to A3 were RECONSIDERED at the FLTC meeting and it was NOTED that all requested amendments and signatures were now complete.

25.1 **ACTION:** Further minor amendments were highlighted (section 4C on all appendices should note ‘not applicable’ and it was also NOTED that section 15 with regards to continuous assessment, the Programme Director would be asked to give an update on progress in introducing assessed coursework, after the programme Annual Review in February. FLTC AGREED that once corrections were made, the FLTC were happy for the AD to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to the Faculty Board.

26. BSc Defims Programme Proposal – Part 1 and Part 2:
FLTC RECONSIDERED both Part 1 and Part 2 forms

26.1 FLTC supported the suggestion made that in Part 1 under section 1 there should be two separate titles to distinguish the 3yr and the 4yr BSc programmes. The following was suggested:

26.1.1 BSc International Management (China) and
26.1.2 BSc International Management (China) including year abroad

26.2 It was NOTED in Section 14 that although there had been discussion with regards to overlapping with the SOAS-Birkbeck joint degree BA Management and Chinese, Executive Board in considering resource issues, had decided that for the present, both programmes could run simultaneously. It was NOTED that this would be reviewed again at a later date.

26.3 The issue was raised, as to whether the BSc designation was appropriate or whether, in common with SOAS joint degrees, it should be designated a BA degree. The Head of Registry had consulted the QAA on this point; there was no guidance in the Management benchmark statement, but a rule-of-thumb of half of courses in the programme syllabus with a ‘technical’ or quantitative character, might be usual. The course proposers were requested to ascertain whether there were UK precedents for a programme with comparable course composition to this one, having BSc designation, if the Department wishes to argue for that.

26.4 Part 2: Section 17 It was noted that the programme proposer had held informal consultations early on with other Departments, but the committee requested that formal signatures be obtained from Heads of Departments involved in the teaching of existing courses onto which it was proposed to add DeFiMS students as part of the proposed BSc degree (China, Politics, Law). Other minor amendments/suggestions and clarification to sections 28, 30, 32, 33, 35 and 37 were made.

26.5 The structure of the curriculum was CONSIDERED, suggestions with regards to core and compulsory courses, weighting along with examining methods were made. It was AGREED that the Defims FLTC member should return to the proposer with all the issues raised.

TO NOTE: The Head of Registry subsequently recast the programme structure matrix into a concise year-by-year list format for the 3-year and for the 4-year programme (attached to these Minutes).

26.6 FLT Committee CONSIDERED Part 2 form at length. Concerns from the Economics and Law Department regarding course teaching overlap were raised. The Defims member emphasized that there was very little overlap and he and the AD pointed out that the focus was not the same in delivering courses about the economic environment to Management and to Economics students (and where only the latter would have Economics as part of their degree title). Student numbers on existing Economics UG courses were also often already high in relation to SOAS room size constraints.
FLTC NOTED that the required Programme Specification which provided teaching and learning outcomes etc., on a standard proforma, was not attached.

**ACTION:** The course proposers would be requested to provide a Programme Specification for consideration at the next FLTC scheduled 5th February, 2009.

It was also hoped that an amended Part 2 form along with all the amended new BSc course proposals would be ready for the next FLTC for final consideration.

27. **Undergraduate Defims New BSc Course Proposals:**
Appendix C1 through to Appendix C17 were individually CONSIDERED at length. Further amendments were made to the proposals. FLTC NOTED that there were two more course proposals to be considered making a total of nineteen course proposals.

27.1 It was AGREED that the Defims representative would ensure that the amendments were made and proposals ready for the next FLTC meeting scheduled for 5th February, 2009.

27.2 FLTC requested that the Library comments from Barbara Spina, the Head of Teaching and Research Support, should be circulated to the members for noting. The Part 2 proposal also urgently needs to be circulated to the other support services (LTU, Student Services, IT/AV, Marketing and Registry, before it could be approved by FLTC for forwarding to LTQC for final approval. Since this proposal was for 2009 entry, the timescale was tight.

28. **Proposed CeDep Programme Modifications for 2010:**
It was noted that this programme amendment could not be taken to a Departmental meeting before coming to FLTC, for logistical reasons. FLTC commended the intention to restructure, but noted that the proposed structure still included courses in natural-science-based subjects in which SOAS does not have academic expertise. This had been highlighted at last year’s Annual Programme Review. The programme directors were asked to bring back a proposed restructuring to FLTC after their February APR this year, which would include definite plans to phase out/replace these courses.

28.1 **ACTION:** After response was received from the Annual Programme Review in February, FLTC would then consider the proposed CeDep programme modifications for 2010.
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29. **Deletion of Law Undergraduate Course Units:**  
   FLTC NOTED the deletion of Law undergraduate courses (Appendix E):  
   *  Comparative Commercial Law and  
   * Comparative Company Law  
   Both these courses had been replaced with Company Law which had been a success. It was therefore deemed not necessary to keep the two courses on the books any longer as it creates confusion.  

**ACTION:** FLTC happy for AD to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to Faculty Board.

30. **New BA Proposals from Faculty of Languages and Cultures:**  
   The content of the new undergraduate courses,  
   * Islamic Transactional Law and Modern Finance and  
   * The Islamic Judicial System (appendices F and G)  
   proposed by the Faculty of Languages and Cultures was CONSIDERED. The Law representative pointed out that this was a prime example of Law course proposals being proposed outside The School of Law and outlined the concerns it presented in meeting quality assurance. FLTC NOTED that the School of Law were happy to cooperate but stated that in line with the Faculty Plan, their main priority was to develop Masters’ courses.  

**ACTION:** FLTC were therefore NOT ABLE to give their approval.  
To Note: At the subsequent meeting of the Programme Proposal Panel next day, the AD (UG) Languages and Cultures explained that the proposal for the BA Islamic Studies was now going forward without the two course proposals named above. The potential remained for LASS/School of Law course offerings to be added at a later date after further discussion.

31. **Teaching Outside Specialist Area:**  
   FLTC NOTED The School of Law concerns about Law courses being taught by tutors who did not have sufficient Law background, and the reputational risk involved. FLTC NOTED that this was an on-going concern and would be monitored.

32. **Mitigating Circumstances for late Submission and Exam Performance:**  
   FLTC CONSIDERED the paper on ‘Mitigating Circumstances for late Submission and Exam Performance’ presented by the Student Welfare office.  

   **32.1** The Committee considered the proposed self-certification form, but after some discussion it was the general view that the form was too vague to produce evidence of mitigating circumstances that could be taken account of by Exam Boards.  

   **32.2** It may be that other Faculties would disagree and that the proposed form would be further developed; it would be advisable for the form to be designed to ensure it was countersigned by the Personal Tutor. It would still need to have medical, bereavement or other evidence attached.  

   **32.4** FLTC AGREED, for the time being, to stick with the present system of requiring proper certification eg medical note, death certificates etc., and that students should be told from the start that they should not expect to go, at short notice, to the welfare office requesting a letter unless they had long term issues such that they had been attending it from the start of their studies.  

   To note: It was subsequently clarified by the welfare office that the form was intended to supplement, not replace, existing certification requirements. A welfare office representative would attend the next FLTC to further explain the proposal.
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33. **New Economics Postgraduate Course Proposal:**
FLTC CONSIDERED the new Economics postgraduate course proposal (Appendix I) entitled:

**Political Economy of Agrarian Change and Development** – of which parent programme was MSc Development Economics.

33.1 **ACTION:** With minor amendments undertaken to section 14b (to insert a more specific due date) FLTC was happy to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to Faculty Board.

34. **New Economics Postgraduate Course Proposal:**
FLTC CONSIDERED the new Economics postgraduate course proposal (Appendix J) entitled:

**Agrarian Change and Development** of which parent programme was MSc Development Studies

34.1 It was NOTED that appendix I and J showed limited interchangeability which meant that they could not be taken together.

34.2 The difference in the CATS points between Appendix I (18 CATS) and Appendix J (22.5) were also highlighted.

34.3 **ACTION:** It was recommended that the proposer of appendix J, **Agrarian Change and Development** would be requested to justify the difference in CATS ratings by adding either another tutorial requirement or written assessment. The course could not be approved until that requirement was met.

35. **Course Information Template Model for Students:**
FLTC CONSIDERED the template submitted by the Development Studies representative. FLTC commended the design of the template and felt that it was a useful model and requested that it be made available on the LASS Faculty BLE for recommended use, with an email alert to LASS academic staff.

36. **Language Acquisition Courses in Taught Masters Programmes:**
The paper presented by the Head of Registry was CONSIDERED by the FLTC members. The paper argues that current arrangements for language acquisition courses in taught masters’ programmes were not Bologna/Bergen compliant and would not stand up to DAPS audit scrutiny.

36.1 FLTC AGREED to go with the third solution outlined in Appendix L, namely to revert to the position as it was some years ago and to have PG language courses valued at 22.5 ECTS points. Using the same example, there would be a course Swahili language (PG) 15PAFC679 (22.5 points). There would be shared teaching with Swahili language 15 590 0985 (15 points) with additional seminars for PGT students and possibly an additional element of assessment to give the added weight necessary to give it the added ECTS points value to bring it up to 22.5.

36.2 **ACTION:** FLTC were happy to RECOMMEND option 3 Solution to Faculty Board.

37. **Learning and Teaching Unit – Project Board:**
The Project Manager of the newly set up Project Board gave a report to the FLTC members. FLTC NOTED that the Project Board was in fact looking at a very wide range of teaching room-related
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projects, including developing new functionality in our software, refurbishing a substantial number of rooms, looking at AV, building works, layout etc and how it was all used.

37.1 It was NOTED that centralised timetable service was just one aspect of this project and that any changes proposed in the direction of more centralisation would come to FLTC and to Academic Board before being implemented. The changes proposed would be for implementation from 2010-11 and not 2009-10.

37.2 The Project Board was also looking to invite an Associate Dean from one of the three Faculties to be a member of the Project Board.

37.3 Questions were raised with regard to the constant clashes of core and compulsory courses which, each year, make it logistically impossible for some degree programmes to run. The Head of Registry suggested marking of core courses clearly on the time table to avoid clashes. It was also NOTED that there were about 749 degree combinations offered by SOAS, which caused much confusion and would benefit from being simplified.

38. Course Amendment:  
FLTC NOTED the temporary course amendment to Theory and Evidence in Contemporary Development – due to the wrong information put on the 2008-09 course outline with regards to the course assessment weighting – stating that it was 70-30 while on the website it stated 80-20.

38.1 ACTION: FLTC AGREED to RECOMMEND APPROVAL to Faculty Board with the proviso that the correct weighting of 80/20 would be reinstated for the next session.

39. AOB:  
There was no other business considered.

40. The next FLTC was scheduled for Thursday 5th February, 2009.