

Research students' SSLC, 16 February 2011

**In attendance:**

Staff: Nayna Bhatti, Anita Prazmowska

Students: Maria Chen, Sacha Nauta, Dan Strieff

Liaison librarian/student: Paul Horsler

**Issues discussed:**

- I. Skype (status)
- II. Mi 512
- III. Paper supply
- IV. Upgrade process
- V. Library poll

**I. Skype:** Follow-up to Michaelmas agenda item: Research students have raised the possibility of creating a department-funded Skype account, which students could access at scheduled blocks of time on campus to make discounted calls for research purposes (to conduct interviews, organize visits to foreign archives, etc.).

Staff seeking details about costs and logistics (Cost? Equipment? Will such use disturb other students?).

Student reps will get back to staff within a week with a very basic feasibility study (forthcoming).

**II. Mi 512:** Follow-up to Michaelmas item on whether the department and the library should work together to create a History-specific version of 512 for 2011-12.

**General consensus:** A History-calibrated 512 could be offered in weeks 4-6 of Michaelmas term with perhaps two sessions per week.

This is intended to offer students access to greater research resources earlier in the year to allow for possible adjustments ahead of the submission of the Research Students' Questionnaire at the end of Michaelmas.

**Paul Horsler will coordinate** with next year's conveners of 501 to reduce redundancies and ensure efficiency.

**III. Paper supply:** First-year research students raised the possibility of creating a Department printing account at the library to which students could have access.

This issue arose because many students feel they do the majority of their printing in the library rather than the PhD computer room.

Issue will be raised at next staff meeting.

**III. Upgrade process:** What went wrong/what went well in 2010?

Widespread feeling that the 15 September deadline for 2010, in addition to the viva process, caused logistical difficulties because of the delays in issuing teaching contracts and the hectic nature of Michaelmas Term.

**Anita:** In search of a compromise, the possibility exists of moving the upgrade submission date and viva to the last two weeks of Summer Term. This would still give students time to conduct research in foreign archives, enable staff to carry out their on research later in the summer and clear up Michaelmas headaches in issuing GTA contracts.

**Students generally** raised concerns about whether the quality of submissions would suffer from the earlier submission dates and/or whether staff would hold students' dossiers to the same standard as with the September submission dates.

**Representatives will seek feedback** on the upgrade from fellow students and forward that on to Anita and Nayna, who will raise the possibility of changes at the next staff meeting.

**IV. Library poll:** Library seeking research student feedback about possible changes in the loan periods for books (too short? Inconsistent? Just right?).

An online poll will be available on the library Web site from 1 March.