

MPhil/PhD SSLC Meeting

Tuesday 11 February 2014 (COL 6.15)

Minutes of meeting

Attended: Pauline Barrieu (chair) (PB)
Anna Louise Schröder (ALS)
Ewelina Sienkiewicz (ES)
Tayfun Terzi (TT)

Apologies Youyou Zhang (YZ)

Minutes: Ian Marshall (IMar)

01.Welcome

PB opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. She noted the apologies sent by YZ, who was teaching at the time of the meeting.

02.Minutes of the last SSLC meeting (30/10/2013)

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting. There were no outstanding matters to be discussed.

03.Does orientation work?

A request was sent out on behalf of the Pro-Director for Teaching to SSLCs to discuss this topic. It was discussed at the last meeting and recorded in the minutes. There were no further comments to add to that earlier discussion.

04. Use of Facebook by the department

IMar explained that the Graduate Admissions Office (GAO) is consulting with departments about the use of Facebook as a communications tool for their graduate programme. At a recent GAO workshop it was stated that those departments already doing this received positive feedback from students.

It was noted that there is already an informal LSE Statistics Research Group Facebook page set up by PhD students. This has forty members.

It was agreed that Facebook is not a suitable replacement for email to communicate official department and school matters. However, a shared Outlook calendar (or similar) to record seminars, workshops and other related events and important dates would be very useful.

Action point:

- 1) IMar will contact IMT (Information Management Technology) to ask if it is possible to set up a shared Outlook calendar for PhD students and selected staff.

05. What opportunities to the academic experience might arise as a result of a change to the structure of the academic year?

This is another topic the Pro-Director for Teaching has asked SSLCs to discuss. It was discussed at the last meeting and recorded in the minutes. It was agreed that a change to the academic year, for example to 12+12+6 or 11+11+7, would not make a great deal of difference to MPhil and PhD students in the Department of Statistics. This is a matter that might be of more relevance to students registered on taught degree programmes.

06. The effectiveness (or otherwise) of the current SSLC structure

It was agreed that the current structure is acceptable, if there is no more than one meeting per term as a maximum. It was suggested that a total of two meetings in each academic year would be sufficient. It was noted that the department has been unable to establish an SSLC comprising of at least one student from each year of the programme, but that the current membership is perfectly adequate.

It was also noted that the department does not currently have a Research Students' Consultative Forum student representative. This was not considered to be a matter that required urgent attention.

07.Any other business

ES asked if there was any update regarding GTA contracts relating to homework marking. PB explained that the matter had been raised by Rafal Baranowski (RB) (GTA representative) at the most recent Teaching Committee meeting. It was agreed that with effect from 2014/15 there should be an increase from one hour to two hours per group per week for homework marking for ST102 and ST107. The matter is now being taken forward with HR (Human Resources) to confirm that this is permissible.

TT pointed out that ST205 also includes weekly homework and was asked to report this to RB for the next Teaching Committee meeting.

Action points:

- 1) TT to notify RB (Rafal Baranowski) that ST205 includes weekly homework.

The next PhD SSLC meeting will take place on a date to be confirmed at a later time.