



GRADUATE STAFF /STUDENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 01 November 2017

12 Noon

Drayton House, Room 321

MINUTES

Attendance

Ian Preston	Chair, Graduate Tutor
Fabien Postel-Vinay	MSc Programme Director
Eric French	MRes Programme Director
Kajal Kumar	MSc Economics Student Representative
Nikolaos Neos	MSc Economics Student Representative
Aonghus O'Coilain	MSc Economics Student Representative
Peter Reddy	MSc Economics Student Representative
Nana Akoto	MSc Economic Policy Student Representative
Valentina Silva	MRes Economics Student Representative
Andrea Smurra	MPhil Economics Student Representative
David Goll	PhD Economics Student Representative
Carlo Galli	Lead Representative & PhD Economics Student Representative
Daniella Harper	MRes, MPhil, PhD Programmes Administrator
Tina Fowler	MSc Programmes Administrator & Committee Secretary

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Minute 6.2 HPC: CG circulated an email message to the students on the subject.

3.2 Minute 7.2 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey: DG circulated the results to the students; no feedback has been received to date.

4. **MSc Economics: Student Requests and Concerns**

- 4.1 The student representatives reported that they had circulated a questionnaire to the students to obtain feedback on their impressions so far. The response rate was 50%.
- 4.2 Programme workload and pace: Students report that the pace is slightly too fast, especially in Microeconomics. **Action:** student representatives to feed back to the lecturers.
- 4.3 Tutorial group sizes: Students feel that the groups may be too large, or it may be that the focus is wrong, with less emphasis needed on problem sets and more on discussing the intuition behind solutions. **Action:** student representatives to feed back to the lecturers.
- 4.4 Maths & Stats exam: The students report that the timing of the exam at the end of the second week was fine.
- 4.5 Timetable: Students are happy with the Term 1 timetable; blocking lectures on one day per week works for the students.
- 4.6 Matlab: Students would like an introductory lecture in order to attempt the problem set that requires its use. **Action:** Students to ask the course lecturer to organise this.
- 4.7 Term 2 options modules: The students want to be able to sample courses at the beginning of term, as past students have. Moreover, students report being willing to trade off an early exams timetable for the chance to sample options courses.
- 4.8 Lectures: Students express a preference for lectures to begin with concrete, applied examples, which are followed by generalisations. **Action:** Students to feed back to the lecturers.

5. **MSc Economic Policy: Student Requests and Concerns**

- 5.1 Tutorial classes: When only one tutorial group for a module exists for the MSc Economic Policy cohort, the students have no option to switch between groups if they cannot make it to their assigned group on occasion. **Action:** Students may feed back to the department's Timetabling Officer.

6. **MRes/MPhil/PhD: Student Requests and Concerns**

- 6.1 Microeconomics: MRes students ask that lecture topics be clarified in advance, due to a concern about the lecturer's tendency to switch topics and to be inconsistent in their depth of coverage. **Action:** Student Rep to ask the lecturers.
- 6.2 Lecture recordings: MRes students ask that lectures be recorded because they are dense and students would like to review the presentations. **Action:** Student Rep to ask the lecturer to book Lecturecast.
- 6.3 Moodle materials: MRes students prefer to have editable versions of the material. **Action:** Student Rep to ask the relevant lecturers.

- 6.4 Part-Time MRes Students: Taught activities are timetabled at the extreme ends of the day, which is not convenient for part-time students. EF responded that, unfortunately, there is nothing we can do to influence the timetable.
- 6.5 TAs Teaching Spaces: Student TAs report that there are often not enough chairs in the tutorial classrooms assigned, rooms are sometimes too small, and often there is no whiteboard in the room allocated. **Action:** Student TAs are advised to take photos of the problematic spaces and email them to the department's Timetabling Officer and the Departmental Manager and to copy in the lecturers.
- 6.6 TA contract reform, which affects (research student) TAs wages and influences funding decisions: TAs report that the timing of the reform, over the summer when many students affected were away and not kept in the loop, was less than ideal. Better communication and more consultation are requested because students are dependent on their TA wages to fund their studies. Some students expect to need financial assistance as a result of the reform and ask if the department will provide it. **Action:** IP to follow up with Departmental Manager.
- 6.7 Scholarships: Students would like central information about the amount and number of scholarships, and number of students competing for funding, so that students can plan. **Action:** DH to make scholarship details more transparent on the web page and communicate it to all students.
- 6.8 Students on Economics web site: Students report that the department's website still does not list the first year PhD students or the MPhil students, while students who have left UCL are still listed. **Action:** DH to follow up with the department's Web Officer.
- 6.9 PhD Summer Conference: Attendance was poor in 2017 due to summer holidays. The students ask if it is possible to move it closer to term time. **Action:** DH to see if that will be possible.

7. Any other business

- 7.1 New to UCL Survey: Students were asked to respond to the centrally managed survey.
- 7.2 Third meeting mandated for the GSSC this year: Students were alerted to the increase in the number of meetings, from two per year to three. **Action:** TF to find a suitable date and time in June.
- 7.3 ENTER: The Jamboree this year is in Toulouse, for which UCL needs four research student presenters and four discussants. Action: Research programme Student Reps to alert their colleagues.
- 7.4 The meeting was closed.