

PGR (MRes/PhD) GRADUATE STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

For the Graduate Staff-Student Liaison Committee Meeting to be held on
5 March 2019

MINUTES

Present:

Student Reps: Antonio Schiavonne (Chair), Alejandra Martinez (Secretary), Cora Neumann, Katherine Brooke, Kathryn Nicholson, Srinjoy Sen, Omiros Kouvavas.

Staff: Jeremy Smith, Maryanne Heafey, Natalie Devon, Manuel Bagues, Helen Riley.

Apologies: Sharun Mukand, Robin Naylor, Kelly Taylor.

1. Minutes of the meeting 15 January 2019

Regarding the point 8 on Inclusion and diversity:

Maryanne Heafey noted that a first event will take place on the first week of term 3, (around 20th April) regarding the Women in Economics meeting. This meeting will be led by Professor Natalie Chen and an email will be sent with more information on this first event.

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Teaching and Learning

3.1 EC9AA

Regarding this module, an email will be sent to Year 1 MRes students with detailed information on the guidelines of the coursework in the next weeks.

3.2 Option modules for next Y2 MRes students

Last year module leaders for MRes Yr 2 option modules held an open event (workshop) in which students asked about the contents for the Y2 modules. This year, the department is considering uploading a series of videos with sufficient information for the prospective students to know about the contents. Some module leaders will provide information through a workshop as in previous years. Student Representative, Cora N., proposed that the current Y2 MRes students give some feedback on the modules for the Y1 students.

Professor Jeremy Smith, also notes that modules that will be listed are only provisional as the conditions to open a module depend on the number of students taking the module (min of 3) and the availability of the faculty members.

3.3 Masters Dissertation for Year 2 MRes students

A guidance document will be available soon in the student webpage for Y2 students to read and inform themselves on the requirements of the dissertation. An email regarding the guidelines will be sent to the students in the next weeks.

3.4 Module evaluation

Regarding module evaluation for the second term, it is now open and will be closed by Sunday 17th March at midnight. Maryanne encouraged student representative to remind their peers to complete the evaluation, which is also a contact point for the MRes students.

Student rep Cora N also asked how teaching assistants can get access to their personal feedback on modules that are not from the economic department (link is provided in the student's personal page).

4. Library Issues

4.1 Research exchange and other events.

Helen R. reminded student representatives and staff about the research exchange meetings held every Thursday 10-12 at the Wolfson Center. Regarding other events, Helen also talked about the "Mental Health Day". Final point, Helen highlighted is that there will be a shortage of study spaces on floor 1 and 2 of the library during the summer vacation due to building works. However, students can study in the remains floors of the library.

4.2 Databases and books

Regarding the available datasets for MRes students for their Dissertation, Helen also noted the library has some resources students can use and can access the information online or by emailing her personally. She will send an email to students on the beginning of term 3 on this matter. Helen also pointed out that any necessary books that students might need, should also be detailed to her via email. Databases that are from WBS or that are not public, might have restricted access and students who are interested should also email Helen with the specifics in order to make a decision about acquiring the data or providing guidance to students to access the data.

5. Computing Issues

Student rep. Kathryn Nicholson highlighted that not all computers in the MRes have all programs working. Specifically, she pointed that some computers do not have Matlab. Maryanne to ask Peter K

to assess this problem and install the required programs on all computers.

6. Assessment and Feedback

Student rep Katherine Brooke mentioned that Y1 students would prefer exams to be taken one week after the end of the term. A study week will give the necessary time to prepare for the exams. This Y1 student's chose to have exams right after the term, but they think that for future students a week will be better in order to fully prepare for the exams.

Student rep Kathryn Nicholson also wanted the department to disclose the weighting of the examinations earlier, as she claims Y1 did not have access or found this information. Maryanne H replied that this information is available on the module web page. Professor Manuel B indicated that at the beginning of each module professors should take sufficient time to clarify the evaluation scheme with students.

Students also felt that mid-terms are good practice for the final exam, and that might be a good idea for the future cohorts. Maryanne H to talk with the module lecturers about these matters and deciding next year's evaluation scheme.

7. Student Support and Guidance

7.1 Scholarships and research funds

PhD and MRes students had a meeting and requested that the department increase their monthly stipend to match the minimum UK home office requirement (for a Tier 4 visa application) and to have yearly adjustments to the scholarships following inflation or the updated Home Office requirements, if higher. Maryanne H agreed to raise this matter in the department and to report back to GSSLC.

Student representative Cora N also noted that the initial offer for students estimated an additional 1,000 GBP income, which she claimed no student in the cohort has reached doing invigilation and marking. Student rep Kathryn N also asked if the department can provide the information on the amount of marking and money obtained by past students in order that students have enough and accurate information when receiving the initial offer. Maryanne agreed to investigate this and report back to the GSSLC. Student rep Antonio S also pointed out that, given invigilation and marking are paid through different contracts, it is not clear why they should be mentioned in the initial scholarship offer which is unrelated to these.

7.2 Student access to research grants

Student representative Antonio S is concerned that PHD students are not eligible to apply for the funds assigned to research groups. Professor Manuel B responded that applications for research funds are indeed open to PhD students. Professor Jeremy S also pointed out that if a student wants to apply to any research fund that he\she should seek the full support of their advisor, but that the student will

be considered in the process as any other researcher.

8. Careers & Skills

8.1 Feedback on events

Student rep Kathryn N. feedback on the career and skills events that she is unable to get registration to some of the events. Also, she asks if it is possible to get access to the information of the talks online. Stephanie Redding (Careers Rep) agreed to check this issue.

8.1 Women economist lunches.

Maryanne H highlights the next event of women in economics and job market outside academia.

9. Other businesses

9.1 Business cards for PhD students

Students raised the need for presentation cards. Professors Jeremy S and Manuel B noted that this is not useful in academia and thus the department should not provide students the cards. Also, they point that the minimum are 100 cards and that this is a high cost. Student Kathryn N notes that students can do these themselves by emailing the Communications department to use the departmental logo. Information on how to proceed will be sent out to the students.

9.2 Noise during next months due to construction

Due to the building works taking place in the department buildings, noise from the construction will starting the months of June until September and possible during the Christmas Vacations.

Next meeting: 30th April 2019, 1-2pm in room s2.86