

**Department of Sociology**  
**Sessional Teacher Committee Meeting on 4th June, 2019**  
**MINUTES**

**Present:** Liz Ablett (LA) (Sessional Teacher), Darani Anand (DA), N Charles (NC), Heidi Fritz Horzella (HFH) (Sessional Teacher), Lynne Pettinger (LP) (Chair), Janet Smith (Minutes).

**Apologies:** C Lambert

**Minutes** of the Sessional Teachers (STs) meeting held on 14th November, 2018 had been previously agreed by email circulation.

1. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

2. **Additional Pay for additional Work outside the contract**

REPORTED:

LA raised the issue of convenors asking STs to do additional work outside their agreed contract i.e. additional meetings, email replies to students regarding formative work etc. STs are aware that the 'Reading Week' payment is designed to cover this however there are believed to be discrepancies across the ST pool as to what is approved for the Reading Week payment and what they can claim for.

It was reported that the ST contract includes the Reading Week hours but it does not specify how the payment is broken down and clarity was requested. DA said that the Reading Week payment includes contact and preparation work however there is no contact and preparation during Reading Week so this payment is used to cover any meetings/emails tutors have with convenors.

AGREED:

DA to speak to STP and ask them to include an additional column on the contract to cover Reading Week related payments.

To include on the STs training agenda and website an item to cover the Reading Week payment. This will explain what Reading Week was designed for and explain that the Reading Week payment is averaged out over the term, and ask STs to let the ST convenor know if they are asked to do extra meetings to let us know.

LP/AC to work with module convenors to make sure that they are clear of what falls under the STs contract and what would either constitute additional payment or be the responsibility of the module convenor e.g. communicating with a group of students.

### 3. Exam and Marking Schedule

#### **Communications regarding problems with the exam timetable this year.**

##### REPORTED:

LA raised an example of where it was felt that exam markers' had not been communicated to regarding the problems with the timetable which had caused workload/financial problems etc. for many markers.

DA briefed us on the administrative problems which had resulted in the examinations timetable difficulties. It was recognized that DA and FB had worked hard to mitigate the effects of last minute changes enforced on the department. The university is having a thorough review of the exam timetable process to ensure there is not a repeat of these events.

LA informed that one ST was contracted to mark 35 scripts and has had to mark 80. It was felt that an issue such as this should be clearly identified and communicated and that STs felt unable to push back against the expectation to be flexible. LP advised that if any ST feels that the work is coming to them too quickly or is not what was expected that they should contact the module convener, DA, LP or VK so that it can be dealt with quickly.

DA advised that at the beginning of the year when ST contracts are raised the marking quota is an estimate. STs are paid for the number of pieces of work that have been submitted and this is cross-referenced to the count on Tabula.

HF/LA outlined the difficulties of marking a script and giving feedback within the stipulated timeframe emphasizing that the problem is exacerbated for teachers for whom English is their second language and where the assignments are done in two parts. DA advised the number of words allocated to marking essays and exams had been discussed at the time the framework was being trialed and that the word limit was extended to take into account new markers. LP considered the payment to be fair, and more generous than that at other universities.

##### AGREED:

DA to check before marking is released the difference between the number of scripts contracted to mark and actual number submitted. In terms of payment everyone is paid for the number of scripts actually marked rather than the number specified in the contract. This information will be updated on the sessional teachers' web pages by LP.

LP said that the policy updates discussed would be included on the ST web pages over the summer in time for the new academic year.

LP informed that the feedback template can be adapted to meet differing assignment formats such as two part assignments and that the module leader should lead on this.

LP said the department is working within the ST framework for marking and that if STs felt there was a problem it would require the collective action of STs within the university to speak back to the framework.

4. **Any Other Business**

DA said the sessional teaching interviews had taken place for teaching in the 2019/20 academic year. There will be another round of interviews, after the summer exam boards, following which places will be allocated.

This is the final sessional teacher meeting for the academic year 2018/19.