

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**POSTGRADUATE STUDENT VOICE MEETING**

**4 December 2019**

**14.00 – 16.00 hours**

**Chair** Dr Guveli and Mx Caris-Hamer  
**Staff present** Professor Canessa, Dr Sergi, Mr Brooker, Miss Clark

**Student representatives**  
Miss Neag, Miss Marriott, and Miss Robinson

**Secretary** Ms Hall

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2019 were agreed as a true record.

**Action**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(PGSSLC M22/19)

It was noted that the Graduate Conference in April was difficult for PGT students to attend and has now been arranged that PGR students only attend at that time. A Masters Day was arranged for February. PGT students would be welcome to join the Graduate Conference in April if they wished.

GTA issue

Miss Neag noted that module convenors were not providing teaching material for GTA staff and she also raised concerns that the expectations of modules convenors were not being met. Mx Caris-Hamer noted that Dr Crowhurst had added some resources to Box, but this had not been communicated to students. In addition, Mx Caris-Hamer and Miss Neag acknowledges that Dr Crowhurst has dealt with some concerns at a previous GTA meeting. Ms Hall would discuss with Ms Thomsen, the Department Manager.

25/19

**MH/  
CT**

**MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (paper PGSVG/19/03)**

The membership and terms of reference were noted and amended.

26/19

**MH**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

It was agreed that Miss Neag, Mx Caris-Hamer, Miss Marriott and Miss Robinson would attend the Department meeting on 11 December. It was agreed that Ms Hall would contact SVG representatives to arrange attendance at further Department Meetings.

**POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT**

i) Deadlines

Miss Mackenzie raised the issue of bunching of deadline dates in the first weeks of spring and summer terms. It was agreed that the deadlines could be spread over the week, rather than make them any earlier. It was agreed that Dr Sergi and Ms Hall would look at deadlines and make changes for the spring term.

27/19

**AS/MH**

<p>ii) Personal Tutors</p> <p>Mx Caris-Hamer raised concerns that there was no personal Tutor contact for most of the PGT students. It was agreed that Dr Sergi would contact staff to ensure an email was sent to their Tutor groups before the end of term and another email would be sent to students advising them where to find this information. Mr Brooker would send lists to Dr Sergi.</p>	28/19	<b>AS/RB</b>
<p>iii) SC509</p> <p>Dr Bailey had advised students that no contact would be made during strike action and no contact would be made over the four week Christmas vacation. Ms Hall would contact Ms Thomsen for a policy on expectations of communication during vacation for Academic, GTA and Students.</p>	29/19	<b>MH/CT</b>
<p>iv) Feedback</p> <p>Mx Caris-Hamer raised concerns that the deadline of 9 September was too tight when the department had a no contact during August policy. It was agreed that Ms Hall would check the ruling as the deadline was centralised.</p> <p>Dr Sergi would communicate to staff to make a reasonable and transparent Dissertation plan when meeting Dissertation students.</p>	30/19	<b>MH</b>
<p>v) Dissertation Seminars</p> <p>Miss Mackenzie reported a timetable clash for SC981 and SC920 in January and February. Dr Sergi would contact Skills for Success for more information on the SC981 timetable and discuss potential changes.</p>	31/19	<b>AS</b>
<p>vi) Any other Business</p> <p>Miss Mackenzie and Miss Robinson reported that both SC905 and SC982 were excellent modules. She also reported that Mr Brooker was excellent in his role as Study Centre Manager and wished that he would be made a full time employee. It was reported that's SC508 was a popular module but not all students could attend due to a timetable clash. It was something that the department would check for the next academic year.</p>	32/19	<b>AS/MH</b>
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## **POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

It was confirmed that PGR students could ask their supervisors permission to record meetings.

<p>It was discussed that the PhD Colloquia were a success, but it was felt that the Second and Third Colloquia were geared towards academic pathway and more focus needed on employability outside of academia. Miss Neag felt the Third year Colloquia was geared towards professional development and it needed to be more focussed on completing the PhD Thesis. Dr Guveli advised that the fourth year colloquium was open to all and covers non-academic pathways and employability. It was agreed that Ms Hall would speak with the colloquia convenor Professor Soysal for details of second, third and fourth year outlines and to discuss any future updates with Dr Guveli to report back.</p>	34/19	<b>MH</b>
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## **GRADUATING TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

<p>Miss Neag raised concerns that convenors made last minute changes to Lesson Plans and Module Outlines without notifying GTA's. It was felt that teaching material and lesson plans need to be published at the beginning of the academic year. Miss Neag also requested if there was additional induction material for new GTA's for preparation and how much to prepare. It was agreed that there should be a policy with a minimum level of material from</p>	35/19	<b>MH/IC</b>
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convenors at the beginning of each term. Ms Hall would contact the GTA officer, Dr Crowhurst.

It was reported that the SC104 module outline was not followed by the convenor and that students and GTA's often followed incorrect material.

It was agreed that more support was needed from the module convenors and on a more regular basis.

It was reported that class lists were chaotic this year, but were advised that changes were made centrally and often departments had no control.

It was reported that the GTA online training was too long resulting in some skipping the training and just taking the quiz.

It was reported the Sociology GTA's notified one week prior to the two day training session, but other departments' GTA's had two months notification.

It was confirmed that GTA's could contact Mr Brooker to arrange additional support classes within the Sociology Study Centre.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dr Sergi requested that the representatives speak to all student requesting they complete the Student Assessment of Module Teaching forms, including positives and negatives.

Dr Sergi also requested that the representatives notify students that they should contact her directly, as PGT Director, if they had any concerns, but if they could not speak with Dr Sergi, they would speak to the Head of Department, Professor Canessa or the graduate administrator, Ms Hall.

Ms Clark reported that both the PGT and PGR SU Convenors had now started, one of which was a Sociology student.

Michele Hall  
Graduate Administrator