



**Student-Staff Committee Meeting
In-Sessional Programme
Semester One (2021/22)**

Minutes of the INTO Newcastle University Student-Staff Committee held at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 13th December 2022, via Zoom conferencing.

Present: Nick Bailey (Chair – Programme Manager), Rep 1: Memoona Afzal (Student Chair, Writing for TESOL), Rep 2: Keyu Zhao (INU9112 Writing for Humanities and Social Sciences), Rep 3: Anuraag Roy (INU6034 Writing for EEE), Rep 4: Anna Nix (INU6174 Critical Writing Skills for Undergraduates in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies), Rep 5: Jennifer Hsieh (INU6074 Writing for Management and Marketing), Rep 6: Cho Ng (INU9134 Writing for MPhil/PhD students in HASS and SAgE (Part A)), Rep 7: Daniil Petrov (INU9094 Writing for Business School Undergraduates), Helen Lewis (Subject Lead, Minutes).

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Introductions were made.

Apologies for absence: None were sent

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The Chair gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the meeting: to improve the registration process and course materials through constructive feedback.

Comments on the registration process and In-Sessional modules

- **Rep 1** commented that some of her classmates had not been aware of the purpose of the In-Sessional programme and were therefore not sure why they should attend the sessions. N.B. responded that all international students with a second language had received a link to a video publicizing the programme, and H.L. commented that she had also delivered a talk to the TESOL students in the first week of the semester, with the same purpose.
- Concerning the Writing for TESOL sessions, rep 1 commented that many of her classmates had been happy with the course and had found it useful, as it was assignment specific.
- Input on the assignment writing process and how to break down an assignment brief were considered particularly helpful.
- However, she further mentioned that there had been two groups and some students felt that they hadn't learnt as much as those included in the other class. She therefore asked whether a standardized scheme of work could be applied for all groups being taught the module. N.B. commented that this approach is already supposed to be taken on In-Sessional modules.

<p>Issue: Some students questioned the variation in classroom activities across the two groups for Writing for TESOL.</p>
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Action: N.B. and H.L. to liaise to ensure that next year's teaching of Writing for TESOL is more uniform in delivery.

- **Rep 5** commented that she had received positive feedback on the registration process from her classmates, who had found their automatic registration for the writing course convenient.
- Concerning the INU6074 sessions, she had received feedback that some students initially did not understand why they needed to attend, having received high scores on their IELTS tests; however, classmates commented that the sessions had been useful, with good activities and feedback, and students were now aware of the purpose of the classes.
- She further said that the learning points had been appropriate and pitched at the right level.

- **Rep 2** said that classmates had provided positive feedback on the registration process, which they said was simple and easy to use; however, they would also have appreciated a reminder when it was time to register.
- In terms of INU9112, students had commented that the teachers were careful, patient and had answered students' questions well. The activities covered in class were useful.
- Some classmates had commented that they would like input on how to use data analysis software. N.B. responded that data analysis is not an area of expertise for the In-Sessional team since our role is to teach students how to communicate their subject knowledge in academic English. However, the Academic Skills team would be able to offer advice on data analysis.
- Rep 2 said that she was aware of the ASK website, which she'd found on the library website and heard about from other students.

- **Rep 4** said that many of her classmates would have preferred the INU6174 module to be voluntary and questioned whether they needed to attend the sessions, some of them having completed GCSEs and 'A' levels in the English language.
- Some film students had also been registered for the module, despite the fact that they weren't set the assignment which the lessons were based around. N.B. commented that the In-Sessional team had found out quite late in the process that these film students had been registered in error.
- Rep 4 further commented that many learning points addressed by INU6174 had already been covered by the 'Scholarly Practice' sessions which classmates had already been required to attend.
- Some classmates found that the teacher wasn't able to answer detailed questions about the assignment, since their knowledge was simply based on the module handbook.
- They further commented that the module came too late, with its timing towards the end of the semester.

Issue: Some students questioned the timing of the INU6174 sessions, whether the right students had been registered and whether the assignment support provided was appropriate.

Action: The In-Sessional team should liaise with the School concerning the following points:

- To make sure that the correct students have been registered for the module, including the list of degree programmes included and whether all students should be automatically registered
- To establish whether an appropriate assignment has been chosen as the focus for the sessions and whether an assignment set earlier in the semester should be chosen

- **Rep 7** commented that he had received informal, verbal feedback concerning the Writing for Business Undergraduates course, rather than emails, from his classmates.
- Some classmates had previously studied on the Foundation course at INTO and found that the content of the INU9094 classes was extremely similar and had therefore stopped attending them. N.B. commented that the former Foundation students had been registered in error and that this should be avoided in future.
- Rep 7 further commented that classmates would value input on how to write reports, rather than essays, since this is more applicable to their degree course.

Issue: Some students have questioned whether they should be registered for Writing for Business Undergraduates and whether the right text types are covered in the lessons.

Action: The In-Sessional team to liaise with the Business School to ensure that former Foundation students are not registered on the module and discuss whether the content and timings of the lessons are appropriate.

- **Rep 3** commented that the automatic registration process for the module had been convenient for the students.
- The first session of Writing for EEE had been very good, but the teacher had commented that many students were unlikely to continue attending the sessions during the course of the semester.

Issue: Some students might have been discouraged to attend Writing for EEE sessions, since a member of staff commented that this module frequently has low attendance.

Action: N.B. to comment during teacher induction that teachers should not refer to the dropout rate in their lessons.

- Rep 3 further commented that it might be better to focus on report writing in the first few sessions of the course, since students are required to submit a report early on, and then move on to look at more specific grammar points.

Issue: Some students taking Writing for EEE asked whether it might be possible to address report writing nearer the beginning of the semester.

Action: The In-Sessional team to liaise with the School to ensure that the scheme of work is appropriate for the module.

- **Rep 6** commented that the registration process for the Writing for PhD course had been easy to navigate. However, it would have been good to receive more detailed information about the syllabus before registration.

Issue: Some students considering whether to register for the Writing for PhD sessions would like more detailed information about the syllabus prior to registration.

Action: Make individual lesson titles and the syllabus available to prospective students on the website.

- Comments about the course had generally been positive, but some classmates had commented that the input had been more appropriate for first year PhD students than second and third years. In particular, the two lessons on critical reading might have been more appropriate for students near the beginning of their PhDs. N.B. commented that first year PhD students are not currently allowed to register for this course, since a more appropriate module is provided for them, but that this general approach could be re-considered.

Issue: Some Writing for PhD students have commented that the input in Part A of the course is more appropriate for students near the beginning of their PhDs.

Action: Review which year groups are invited to register for Part A and also whether a separate Writing for PhD course is needed for first years.

- Some students would prefer more advanced content and a more didactic approach with more teacher input, in addition to more input on how to synthesize sources and write summaries. They would also like less emphasis on group work and clearer feedback from the teacher on the answers to activities.
- Having attended Part B of the course in the previous academic year, rep 6 also commented that he had found that part of the course more useful than Part A.

Issue: Some Writing for PhD students would have liked more feedback from the class teacher on the answers to activities.

Action: Emphasize in the teacher induction that teachers should give students the chance to get feedback as a full class on the answers to activities which they've attempted.

Any Other Business (AOB)

- Rep 1 reported that some students had asked whether it might be possible to have lessons that were shorter than two hours. N.B. commented that we receive a variety of feedback on lesson length, with some students requesting shorter and some longer lessons.
- Rep 4 asked who the appropriate contacts within SACs might be in order for the INU6174 students to approach them about the question of automatic registration on the module. N.B. replied that Jonathan Ward and Gareth Longstaff were appropriate contacts. Students should feel free to copy him into any communications with these members of

staff and that they could also be approached about the question of the film students registered on the module in error.

N.B. then thanked everyone for having attended the meeting and said that the minutes would be circulated in due course. He also mentioned that student reps might also like to attend the Board of Studies which would take place February and that he would be in touch again with them concerning this meeting closer to the time.