



**Student-Staff Committee Meeting
In-Sessional Programme
Semester Two (2022/23)**

Minutes of the INTO Newcastle University Student-Staff Committee held at 15.00 on Wednesday 24th May 2023, via Zoom conferencing.

Present: Nick Bailey (Chair – Programme Manager), Rep 1: Bernardo Carvalho de Mello (Student Chair, INU9124 Writing for Humanities and Social Sciences - Part B), Rep 2: Mizuho Kawashima (1-to-1 Writing Tutorials), Rep 3: Hua Wansu (INU1009 Academic Seminar Skills), Rep 4: Ian Miculob (INU8001 Researching and Writing in Science and Engineering), Rep 5: Nabeel Al-Zobaie (INU6424 Writing for Postgraduates in Computing Science), Rep 6: Memoona Afzal (Writing the Literature Review for your Dissertation), Rep 7: Fatimah Alsalem (INU9144 Writing for MPHIL/PhD students in HASS and SAgE – Part B), Rep 8: Alessandro Guiducci (INU7134 Improving the Accuracy and Fluency of your Spoken English), Helen Lewis (Subject Lead, Minutes).

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

Apologies for absence: None were sent

The Student Chair gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the meeting: to improve the registration process and course materials through constructive feedback. He also explained how feedback provided at the meeting is passed on to the Board of Studies and the External Examiner.

Comments on the registration process and In-Sessional modules

- **Rep 2** said that although she had not received any email feedback from the other students booking one-to-ones, she was concerned that the appointments were often fully booked and that not enough timeslots were available.
- N.B. commented that the number of one-to-one tutorials available is constantly under review. At some times in the year the appointments are fully booked, but at other times many timeslots are not taken up. Development is at work on the RISE system, so that next year students will be asked to specify the reason they're requesting an appointment at the time of booking. This should help to avoid the number of appointments cancelled at the last minute, which is currently reducing the capacity of the system.
- Rep 1 was satisfied regarding the quality of the tutorials and had found them very helpful.
- She suggested that a brief survey could be emailed to students attending the appointments immediately after they'd taken place, a feature currently offered by the Academic Skills team.

Issue: An individual survey collecting feedback immediately after one-to-one writing tutorials could be very useful.

Action: Consider developing a feedback form on RISE to collect individual feedback following one-to-one tutorials and In-Sessional classes.

- **Rep 3** said that the registration process for INU1009 with her School had been smooth and enjoyable.
- She further commented that the input in the lessons had been systematic, well-presented and coherent.
- She particularly enjoyed the way in which theoretical input had been followed up by a chance to practise at the end of each lesson.
- The chance to practise the seminar presentation in class time had also been very welcome.
- She had received some feedback from classmates saying that there had been some confusion regarding the requirements for the choice of seminar topic. At a certain point it was unclear whether the seminar topics needed to be related to the students' degree studies or not.

Issue: INU1009 students were uncertain about whether the topic of their seminars needed to be related to their degree studies.

Action: Consider reviewing the module documentation and speak to the class teacher in 23/24 to ensure that the requirements for the choice of seminar topic are absolutely clear.

- Some students felt that the workbook was too informal and not informative enough. It could also have provided clearer guidance on the choice of seminar topic.

Issue: Some INU1009 students would like the workbook to be more informative regarding the choice of their seminar topic.

Action: Consider whether some adaptations could be made to the INU1009 workbook to make it more informative.

- NB said that the External Examiner had recently asked the programme to consider the value of the INU1009 assessment and whether this presented a realistic task for the students.
- Rep 3 commented that this probably depended on the preferences of the individual student. Personally, she had been very keen to learn how to lead a seminar and so had found the course very beneficial. However, other students had commented that they would have preferred lessons more geared towards improving their general spoken English.
- N.B. commented that the current aim of the module isn't really to improve general speaking skills and that the non-credit-bearing speaking and listening modules are more oriented towards this. Perhaps these modules could be better publicized to all the students in 23/24.

- **Rep 4** said that there hadn't been any problems concerning the automatic registration for module INU8001.
- The only difficulty for the students had been that the location of the classes changed frequently.
- A couple of sessions had been cancelled at short notice, which also caused a little inconvenience.
- N.B. commented that this cancellation had been due to last minute timetable changes implemented by the students' academic School.
- Rep 4 said that the content of the module had been well-structured, that the materials were helpful, and that comprehensive guidance had been provided from start to finish.
- The input on how to search databases, organize literature and improve writing skills had been particularly helpful.

- The input on how to avoid plagiarism and use A.I. responsibly was also very welcome.
- Some students had commented that they would prefer the workbook for the module to be optional.
- N.B. commented that the workbook had been made compulsory in order to encourage engagement with the process of preparing the literature review and that learning about the process is even more important than the finished product.
- **Rep 8** asked whether the module was also available to students other than those on the Hydro-Informatics programme.
- N.B. said that this was a particularly relevant question since INU8001 would be discontinued next year and that the materials developed for the module would also be valuable to students on other degrees. In the meantime, rep 8 could be sent the materials for the module

<p>Issue: INU8001 will be discontinued in 23/24 and the materials prepared for the module would be valuable to students on other degree programmes.</p>
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<p>Action: Consider how the INU8001 materials could be taught to a range of students in future academic years.</p>

<p>Issue: Rep 8 would like access to the INU8001 materials.</p>
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<p>Action: Ensure that the INU8001 materials are sent to rep 8.</p>
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- **Rep 5** said that the registration process on INU6424 had been very straightforward.
 - The input on organizational skills on the module was particularly valuable, as were the lessons on finding resources and writing different sections of a dissertation.
 - N.B. commented that the remaining two lessons in July would provide more specific input on writing skills.
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- **Rep 6** had to leave the meeting unexpectedly but provided some brief feedback via the chat box.
 - She commented that Duncan's session on Writing Literature Reviews and Helen's session on Writing Proposals had both been very valuable.
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- **Rep 7** commented that the registration process for the Writing for PhD sessions had been very straightforward. However, some students had not been aware that Part A had been available in Semester 1 before Part B.
 - Students on the module had commented that Helen was a helpful teacher.
 - However, some students would have preferred more interactive and group discussion elements in the lessons.
 - The lessons had been helpful in providing input on writing different sections of a thesis.
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- **Rep 8** said that the registration process for the Listening and Speaking lectures had worked well.
 - The sessions had been interesting and helpful and provided valuable input on how to improve the students' language level.

- However, he would have liked to receive some follow-up activities to structure further practice after the sessions.
- N.B. and H.L. commented that the current content of the sessions does provide guidance on how the students can follow up the sessions with self-study activities. They also wondered whether a Canvas discussion board following the sessions might encourage students to discuss how they could practise the strategies outlined during the lectures.

Issue: Some students would like to receive specific follow-up activities following the listening and speaking lectures with suggestions of how they could implement the strategies.

Action: Consider whether structured follow-up activities could be provided after the Listening and Speaking lectures.

- **Rep 5** commented that it would be good to publicize the benefits of the In-Sessional programme more to students.
- N.B. asked the student reps whether they were familiar with digital badges, as the university is keen to use these in future to promote the In-Sessional programme.
- The reps responded that this sounded like a good idea but that they weren't currently familiar with digital badges.

Issue: In-Sessional students are interested in the idea of earning digital badges but need to learn more about them.

Action: N.B. to pass the feedback on to James Gerrard that students need to be informed concerning digital badges.

- **Rep 1** said that registration on INU9124 had posed some challenges for students arriving in January, since they weren't initially aware of the In-Sessional programme or the abbreviations for the different faculties within the university.
- They also weren't initially aware of 'Part A' of the course, although Helen had explained that it wasn't a pre-requisite and also made the prior learning materials available to them.

Issue: Module INU9112 isn't currently available to students arriving in January, since it is only offered in Semester 1.

Action: Consider offering INU9112 during Semester 2 and/or making it clearer to students that it's not a pre-requisite for attending INU9124.

- The content of this year's INU9124 sessions had been highly valuable, and Helen had adapted well to the needs of the students, making the sessions more interactive as they went along.
- The sessions in which students had evaluated samples of their own work were particularly useful.

Any Other Business (AOB)

- **Rep 5** commented that six, rather than four modules would be welcome for module INU6424.
- **Rep 3** reported that some students on INU1009 had commented that the workbook was too time-consuming.

- N.B. replied that INU1009 is a 10-credit module, comprising 100 hours of work, and that the workbook is therefore intended to provide activities for some of the 82 remaining hours of self-study time outside lesson time.
- Rep 8 plans to return to Newcastle in January of 2024 and asked whether he could attend the Writing for PhD classes next academic year.

Issue: Rep 8 is keen to attend the Writing for PhD sessions in future.

Action: Give rep 8 access to the Writing for PhD materials on Canvas immediately and also send the worksheets, but not answers, for Part B.
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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 later in the summer and that he would be in touch again with them concerning this meeting closer to the time.