

University of Glasgow**Academic Standards Committee – Friday 3 October 2014****Periodic Subject Review: Updated Responses to
Recommendations arising from the Review of School of
Modern Languages and Cultures held on 18 and 19 February
2013****Mrs C Omand, Senior Academic Policy Manager****Recommendation 3**

The Team recommended that the School work towards delivery of weekly oral classes, or to providing equivalent provision, to achieve the desired aims of confident and independent graduates. If the School opts to develop 'equivalent provision' the School should engage with the student body to ensure that students consider that it is of equal value to weekly oral classes. [Paragraph 4.8.4]

For Action: Head of School**For information: Dean (Learning and Teaching)****Response:**

This is the most challenging of the Review's recommendations because of continued constraints on resources that make it difficult simply to opt to provide weekly oral classes. In the light of this, a working group has been created to review the available options, including different forms of equivalent provision. This task needs to be placed in the context of more general discussions about the way speaking activities are balanced and integrated with teaching of the other core skills (writing, listening and reading). The working group will report its findings to the School in Semester 1 2014 for discussion and agreement, followed by implementation of the chosen solution in 2015-16.

ASC Comment

It was noted that the involvement of students in the working group was "not felt to be appropriate". ASC suggested that as an alternative, the School could consider the use of student focus groups to engage with the student body.

SMLC Response

A student focus group has been held as part of the SMLC Working Group on Language Teaching and Oral Classes [Appendix 1]. Similar groups will be used again in the future to engage students in School business.

Recommendation 4

The Team recommends that GTA and UNLT pay and recognition is reviewed by the School and College to ensure the processes operated by the School are in line with University policy such that GTA and UNLT staff receive fair recompense for the quantity, and quality, of work they deliver. [Paragraph 4.8.8]

For Action: Head of School**For Information: Dean (Learning and Teaching)**

Response:

As mentioned in Recommendation 1, all Language Centre temporary tutors are now employed on short term contracts rather than engaged as atypicals. The HoSA is working with College of Arts HR to assess the feasibility of adopting this practice in the rest of SMLC, but in the interim has established Affiliate status for all Atypical / GTA teachers in order that they can be granted the same building access and IT permissions as employed staff.

ASC Comment

There was some concern that the response (*from SMLC*) did not appear to address (*the*) issue of recompense for GTA staff and further detail on this was therefore sought.

SMLC Response

Pay and recognition for GTA and other atypical workers engaged by SMLC is in line with the University of Glasgow. The workers receive recompense in accordance with the published pay scales for the teaching, preparation for teaching, marking and materials development they undertake. However, in reviewing the comments made by this group of workers as part of the PSR process it is apparent that a concern they had was that they were not remunerated for any office hours they hold or one-to-one tutorials. Such activity is not expected of this group and is not therefore articulated in the duties template for the role [see attached example Appendix 2]. The Programme Directors will be asked to remind atypical workers in their area of the expectations for their role.

- 1) It was noted in the student focus group that when asked about 'oral classes' students have a very fixed idea of a small group where you talk, but when talking about other models, the idea of small groups that also include other skills or 'oral classes' that cover some other skills were given as examples of their 'best experiences' of classes. How do we best structure the various components of our language courses given this contradiction?
- 2) If one hour per week of each of our language courses is dedicated to oral skills, how can we best reinforce these skills in other classes and in extra-curricular activities? (Student suggestions including writing 'culture' essays in the TL and having lectures in the TL at Honours level, but we also need to discuss the use of the TL in other language classes.)
- 3) Is the standard individual end of year oral exam the best way of assessing speaking skills? What alternatives might there be? How do we ensure constructive alignment between expected learning outcomes, class activities, and assessment of oral work?

Problems / issues

- Contact hours
- Exam technique – ie no purpose to class [no constructive alignment]
- Seen as an hour a week and ‘that’s it’ – integrate language across all classes (eg give culture classes in French)
- Lowest level seems to be aim of classes
- Need more structure (nothing to prepare in advance, minimal material, not always clear from programme what we’re doing)

What is an ‘oral’ class?

- class with focus on speaking [very narrow / fixed ideas]
- They did accept that it could add vocab and grammar but not about that – that’s what written classes are for [very black & white]
- Integration into other classes – thought it could work with right teachers

What are the best things you’ve done in oral classes?

- Very positive about teachers (particularly Katrin and Emily – even talked about how they ‘facilitated’ classes)
- Ground rules (lots of talk about ‘forcing’ people to speak)
- Identify important mistakes (either at end of task and put on board or upload on Moodle afterwards, avoid over-correction)
- Feedback (both in class and after exams - not given at levels 1 and 2 but they found it really helpful in Senior Hons). Want to know if this can somehow be integrated into classes so everyone gets some feedback before exam.
- Peer discussion / small groups and report back or have teacher walk round – noted a tendency to sometimes only channel via teacher
- Material – has to be varied eg role plays, games etc
- Topics – ok but do something with them and if there are topics, these should be aligned with written classes

How do you prepare? Use of material on Moodle?

- Varies by language
- Over and under use of Moodle

Possible alternatives:

- Native speaker? Teacher / peer learning?
 - Native speaker [important to hear about growing up and issues in country etc, introducing vocab etc through personal stories]
 - Very astute – talked about training. How to facilitate a class (dealing with talkative or shy students), ‘forcing’ people to speak, need to be stricter.
 - Any peer learning has to be monitored for attendance – otherwise people won’t come
 - Language ‘cafes’ – might already exist (union possibly and definitely in societies).
- Hours per week? Class size?

- Ideally weekly but more about ‘forcing’ people to talk and participate. Class size 10-12 if everyone comes but big focus was on participation.
- Guided tasks? Or ‘free’ conversation?
 - Best classes mixed material – ice breakers, quick questions, very informal. Need to work on small talk / nothing topic based – just the basics. Give tasks and don’t just read article (eg give students roles in a debate to discuss issues)

After my more structured questions, they just chatted and I took notes.

General free conversation at end:

- Level upon entry and variable policies on moving between levels 1 and 2
- Disparity of level (plays to lowest common denominator)
- Grade (10%) for participation – not attendance but you must speak at least once in every class
- Write culture essays in language [Came from a student in Gaelic – apparently they also do exams in language but everyone was very emphatic that they don’t want this part of the deal!]
- Summary / notes of what happened in classes posted on Moodle after class (talk of no guidance, no clear focus)

Overall, when asked about ‘oral classes’, students have a very fixed idea of a small group where you talk but when talking about other models, the idea of small groups that also include other skills or ‘oral classes’ that cover some other skills were given as examples of their ‘best experiences’ of classes.

My suggested areas for discussion:

- Training for teachers (esp around motivating students, managing classes)
- Variety of level and advancing to level 2 (and using level 3)
- Variety of activities
- Coherence of curriculum
- Feedback (both in class and on exams in lower levels)



**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
JOB DESCRIPTION**

Ref No. _____

Job Title	Graduate Teaching Assistant in Comparative Literature
Department/ Division	School of Modern Languages and Cultures
Faculty/Division of AIMS	Arts
Reporting To	[REDACTED]

Job Purpose
To undertake teaching and tutoring principally at the undergraduate level associated with the teaching and assessment of Comparative Literature programme; where appropriate to undertake associated administration as requested by the Programme Director in order to contribute to School teaching and learning objectives.

Main Duties and Responsibilities
1. To deliver a range of teaching activities directed towards students' sound understanding of selected works which feature on the programme syllabus, principally at undergraduate level, to the ultimate achievement of School culture-teaching objectives.
2. In conjunction with the programme director and/or course convener to actively contribute to the development and use of appropriate course materials to ensure that content and methods of delivery meet learning objectives.
3. To participate in the assessment process using a variety of methods and techniques, including presentation assessment, and provide effective, timely and appropriate feedback to students to support their learning.
4. To provide an informed cultural context of selected works in which the culture-learning process can take place.
5. To supervise critical reading work, advising on skills, methods and techniques to assist the transfer of knowledge.
6. To undertake administrative duties as requested by the Head of School or Programme Director.

**University of Glasgow
Job Description**

Dimensions

Deliver teaching at Comparative Literature **level 1**.
 Develop and maintain teaching plans and materials on an ongoing basis throughout the year.
 Undertake teaching in accordance with a fair distribution of the School workload
 Interact with colleagues as appropriate for the fulfilment of course objectives.
 Assist with the design, production and maintenance of assessment exercises and material in connection with teaching culturally different works.

Knowledge, Qualifications, Skills and Experience

Knowledge/Qualifications

Essential

- A1 A first degree in a relevant subject.
- A2 Up-to-date knowledge of the social, cultural and political background of **the 1B course texts**.
- A3 Near-native competence in English.

Desirable

- B1 Knowledge of **selected foreign languages**.

Skills

Essential

- C1 Excellent communication skills both oral and written in English (and other languages).
- C2 Excellent interpersonal skills.
- C3 Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- C4 Time management skills.
- C5 Ability to accept collegiate responsibilities and act accordingly.

Experience

Essential

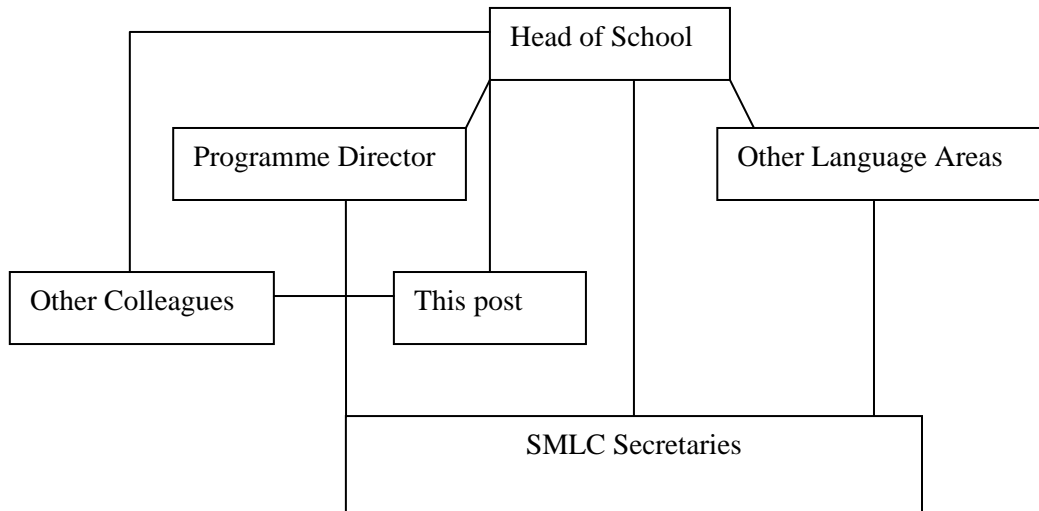
- E1 Experience of teaching literature from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Desirable

- F1 Experience of teaching literature and culture within a comparative framework.
- F2 Broad literature/culture teaching experience at undergraduate or equivalent level.
- F3 Experience of teaching in a range of HE situations (from lectures to small group seminars).

Job Features
<p>Planning and Organising</p> <p><i>Proactive</i> Effective organisation skills to effectively manage time and prioritise as appropriate teaching and administrative duties. Planning and organisation of teaching selected texts with other GTAs as appropriate. Plan and organise administrative duties on an ongoing basis. Weekly/monthly – class planning, organisation and materials generation.</p> <p><i>Reactive</i> Daily queries from School staff/students.</p>
<p>Decision Making</p> <p>Take decisions as appropriate in accordance with assessment processes, course content and committee advice. Prioritise own work. Course co-design and materials generation.</p>
<p>Internal/External Relationships</p> <p><i>Internal</i> Programme Director / Head of School for exchanging information and learning and teaching strategy. Culture/literature teaching team for curriculum delivery and overall assessment. Staff/students to advise and motivate. U/G students for teaching and learning support. Academic support services for appropriate advice and for exchanging information. Student support services, to exchange information, refer/support students.</p> <p><i>External</i> Interaction with academic colleagues in other Universities, to exchange ideas and information about teaching practice.</p>
<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Solve teaching problems e.g. delivery of materials to mixed-ability groups etc.</p>
<p>Other</p>

Organisation Chart



Approved by Job Holder

Name			
Signature		Date	

Approved by Line Manager

Name		Position	
Signature		Date	

Approved by Head of Department

Name			
Signature		Date	