

# SUALL

Scottish Universities

Association for

Lifelong Learning

**Secretary:** Dr Raymond Thomson

University of Strathclyde

**TEL:** 0141 548 2239

**E-mail:** [r.a.thomson@strath.ac.uk](mailto:r.a.thomson@strath.ac.uk)

SUALL Research Sub-committee

**Secretary to the Sub-Committee:**

**Mr Michael Allardice**

Wider Access Study Centre

Centre for Learning & Teaching

University of Dundee

Dundee DD1 4HN

**Tel: 01382 344127 / Fax: 01382 344105**

**E-mail: [m.allardice@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:m.allardice@dundee.ac.uk)**

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**Minutes for meeting of the SUALL Research Sub-committee, held on 13 June 2005 at the St Andrews Building, University of Glasgow.**

Present: Michael Allardice (Secretary), University of Dundee; Margaret Davis, Glasgow Caledonian University; Mark Deacon, Napier University; Keith Mackle, University of Dundee (SUALL Hon. Secretary); Julie McAndrews, University of Aberdeen; Julia Preece, University of Glasgow (Chair); Catriona Tedford, Bell College; Nuala Toman, Glasgow Caledonian University.

**1. Welcome:**

Prof. Preece welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly those who were in attendance for the first time and gave some background to the setting up of the Research Sub-committee.

- 2. Apologies:** Una Bartley, Universities Scotland; Margaret Dundas, SFC; Sonia Filby, Scottish Agricultural College; Jill McKay, University of Dundee; Alison Swanson, University of Dundee.

**3. Note of previous meeting:**

Approved.

**4. Matters arising:**

Contacts had been made with those organisations suggested as possible members of the group at the inaugural meeting. Universities Scotland and SFC had already responded but their representatives could not attend this meeting. Others responses were still awaited.

**5. Feedback on publishing for research seminar;**

Prof. Preece reported that there had been 20 attendees for the whole event plus a number of others who were only able to attend for one or two sessions. The timing of the event had made it difficult for some colleagues to attend despite their desire to hear the speakers.



A number of people had commented that their expectation of the event had been somewhat different from the actuality. Overall, the feedback from those who had attended was very positive and that it had been a good, interesting day. Prof Preece also noted that it had been a good networking experience and had provoked many ideas.

In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that future workshops might be split into smaller groups to bring together researchers of similar experience or to allow less-experienced researchers to meet and work with those whose experience is broader.

Mr Mackle suggested that one area this group might wish to look at is the setting up of a "Research Mentoring" scheme. This led to a proposal that the group create a questionnaire to be sent to all researchers to ask about their needs and then to develop workshops in response to those needs.

The Chair and Secretary agreed to take the development of a questionnaire for researchers forward over the summer. The results from this could be used to devise a research agenda for the field and the possible matching up of research interests across institutions. These could also be disseminated through SUALL & SWARF to contact all researchers in the Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning fields. Ms McAndrew said that she would circulate details of a new network of HEIs and community organisations which was in the process of being set up.

#### **6. Relevant correspondence;**

Prof. Preece has recently received information about a new organisation called Association of Educational Research in Scotland (AERS). It is setting up a training programme at masters level for research in a number of HEIs. Events are also being publicised by Social Research Association for Scotland (SRA), the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE). The Arts & Humanities Research Council are looking for projects to fund in Scotland and elsewhere.

#### **7. RAE update:**

Prof Preece reported that she would be attending the SRHE event on this subject and will disseminate any information gleaned to members. The RAE grades will be 1\*, 2\*, 3\* and 4\*. Issues related to what was defined as international standing were discussed and it has been suggested that 2\* and upwards may be included in this category.

#### **8. Plans for future events:**

The next major activity would be the creation, distribution and collation of the questionnaire discussed in item 5 above.

It was also suggested that a website discussion forum be set up to enable members to contact each other.

#### **9. Notes on research related projects from member institutions:**

Prof Preece – A research fellow (Ralf StClair) working in CRADALL is involved two days per week on a BERA project. Also there is a project looking at guidance across Europe (Pamela Clayton).

Mr Allardice – has been developing a longitudinal tracking project following Access students. Also reported that Dr Blicharski would be presenting a paper

at the forth-coming EAN conference in Vienna on the efficacy to the Royal Bank bursary scheme. Finally, he noted an interest in developing a paper on the role of risk in higher education admissions.

Ms McAndrews – Aberdeen have been developing a tracking project to examine the progression rates of students. She also reported that her department were specifically examining the impact of FE/HE Transition on one pre and one post 1992 University.

Ms Tedford – No research to report yet but is hoping to develop a research profile.

Ms Toman – working as part of CROLL, student retention and progression are the main research thrusts. They are also conducting an FE Lone-parent study with CRADALL.

Mr Deacon – has recently completed a research-led teaching project. Working on research on an E-Learning platform for lay-people to develop citizenship programmes. Also a community interface project on environmental issues in deprived areas within Edinburgh.

Ms Davis – work-based learning CPD “toolkit” for engineers and technicians on a Msc distance-learning course. Developing a project for women returning to work. Also interested in “life-placed learning” research and research into Modern Apprenticeships.

Mr Mackle – working with the Fife & Tayside Regional Forum on a new community-based project. Research to develop out of it.

#### **10. Comments on recently published research or research proposals.**

Prof. Preece and Ms McAndrews suggested the development of interactive discussions via the Internet or through Video Conferencing to improve the communication of new reports or proposals. To be investigated.

#### **11. AOCB**

No other business

#### **12. Date of next meeting –**

**17<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm in the University of Abertay, Dundee.**