

SUALL

Scottish Universities
Association for
Lifelong Learning

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SUALL Research Sub-committee

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Minutes for meeting of the SUALL Research Sub-committee, held on 24th May 2006 at the University of Dundee.

Present: Michael Allardice (Secretary), University of Dundee; Victoria Boyd, Glasgow Caledonian University; Margaret Dundas, SFC; Erica McAteer, University of Strathclyde; Jill McKay, University of Dundee; Julia Preece, University of Glasgow (Chair); Derek Young, University of Stirling.

1. Julia Preece welcomed members and announced that Alex McClelland has just been appointed the new Chair of the SUALL Council.

2. **Apologies:** Simin Abrahams, Universities Scotland, Pete Cannell, Open University Scotland; Hazel Knox, University of Paisley; Julie McAndrews, University of Aberdeen; Catriona Tedford, Bell College.

3. **The minute of the previous meeting was approved.**

4. **Matters Arising:** Prof Preece has been in contact with Jim Gallacher about re-running his seminar later in the year.

Members were also reminded of the SUALL Council AGM taking place in Skye in a few weeks time.

The Secretary commented on the difficulty in arranging Video Conferencing as not all members had easy access to facilities. He had only received six responses to his request for information, including a number preferring face-to-face meetings. Therefore, the May meeting had been rearranged for Dundee to deal with this.

5. **Speaker** - Erica McAteer, Research Capacity Building Network Coordinator, Applied Educational Research Scheme (AERS) opened the meeting with a presentation about the role of AERS. In particular, she highlighted the vision which is to inform the capacity building elements of educational research in Scotland through the piloting of MSc modules by 'mixed mode' learning. The work of AERS links into other research modules being organised by the HEA and others. It also links in to MRes courses at the University of Glasgow and elsewhere. AERS is funded by both SFC and SEED. More information can be obtained on the AERS website: www.aers.ac.uk/aers.

6. **Correspondence:** There was none.



7. Questionnaire Results: The Secretary presented a summary of the results obtained from both electronic and paper responses. In total there had been eleven responses. The key aspect was that respondents wanted the SUALL Research Sub-committee to continue to act as an information source. The meeting agreed that the Secretary should be a conduit for announcements and information to be disseminated to members and other interested parties.

8. Plans for Future Events:

It was proposed that an event be held in late October/early November on the theme of *Action Research*. This would be a joint event with SWARF. A charge of £25 was agreed to cover the cost of catering. Regional Access Forum staff would not be charged for attending.

9. RAE Update: The Chair had no new information.

10 & 11 (Combined). Notes on Research Related Projects from Member Institutions & other Research Activities:

Margaret Dundas highlighted the research work being carried out by the four Widening Access Regional Forums. The Co-ordinating Group are to bring all of these researchers together to identify best practice and possibly provide information on research techniques and also to give an opportunity to disseminate research findings. These research activities are listed on the SWARF website. Margaret also mentioned the idea of trying to bring together staff in subject groupings from schools, Colleges and higher education. A forum for this type of dialogue ought to be identified, although SUALL might not be the best place. This might be something to put to the Funding Council. The North Forum has recently completed a large data-collection, action research project.

Julia Preece reiterated University of Glasgow's MRes course, mentioned in the earlier discussion with Erica McAteer. She also commented that a number of projects previously minuted had just come to an end.

Victoria Boyd highlighted the work being done in her unit looking at FE to HE Transition with a particular emphasis on the issues for disabled students. She also mentioned the TLRP Project which will have a conference in June 2007.

Derek Young told the meeting about a study being conducted on why students who enter HE remain on their courses as opposed to examining those dropping out.

Michael Allardice told the meeting about some of the FE/HE Transition work going on within the Fife & Tayside Wider Access Regional Forum. In particular, a 'scoping study' he is undertaking over the summer which should report back in mid-August.

14. AOCB- None

15. Date of Next Meeting:

1.30pm, 13th November 2006, University of Paisley, Committee Room 2.