

5. One member of the committee proposed that we adopt a system of dissertation modules in third year. It was noted that this possibility had been discussed in the past and it was agreed that dissertation modules were more appropriate to subjects where empirical data could be amassed. The system of Long Essays provides philosophy students with sufficient opportunity in this area.
6. Concern was expressed that the module outlines which appear in the year booklets provide insufficient information about the sort of skills and aptitudes required to perform effectively in a given module. Perhaps lecturers were too keen to 'sell' their modules to students and should be more frank about the demands they will make. Again the system of advised modules is meant to help with this.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

STAFF-STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

MEETING OF DECEMBER 4TH. 2002

Present: Joe Thompson, Emma Collins, Liz Hill, Jo Scuffil, Derek Foster, David Potter, Martin Hutton, Sally Welsh, George Botterill, Bob Stern, Chris Hookway, Leif Wenar, David Owens.

Apologies: Natalie Thomas

1. Concerns were raised that students had little opportunity to question first year lecturers outside the lectures. It was suggested that lecturers might visit tutorial groups once a semester to field questions. The Director of First Year Studies responded that this would increase the demands on staff time and was not in line with his view of the purpose of first year tutorials which was to encourage discussion of issues raised in the lectures rather than to convey new information. It was agreed that the Director of First Year Studies would produce a statement of the purpose of first year tutorials for discussion at the next meeting.
2. Concerns were expressed about the large size of certain seminar groups on second and third years modules. It was agreed that part of the problem is that students prefer to go to modules at times convenient to them, producing an uneven distribution of students across modules on a given course.
3. The possibility of imposing either compulsory modules or distribution requirements in first year was discussed. The importance of doing a variety of modules so as to provide oneself with the intellectual equipment to do a range of modules in second and third year was agreed. Students sometimes unwittingly limit their future range of choice by their decisions in first year. The system of advised modules is intended to help with this but there was disagreement as to whether it did. Compulsory modules would only be practicable in Single Honours due to timetabling problems with Duals and no agreement was reached about whether it would be appropriate. The Director of First Year Studies agreed to look into the possibility of classifying First Year Modules into three broad types and recommending that students do at least one of each type.
4. Concern was expressed about the lack of less technical modules in third year. Since this is largely a function of staff research interests, the Chair of teaching Committee agreed to take the matter up with those involved in staff appointments.