

## Minutes – Meeting Fachrat MATS (29 April 2015)

Present: Joachim Kurtz; Harald Fuess; Christiane Brosius; Daniel Münster; Cathrine Bublatzky; Jule Nowoitnick; Brigitte Berger-Goeken; Oliver Lamers; Henrike Hoffmann; Elisabeth Meyer;

Excused: Man Hom Lam

Guests: Christian Förster (member of the reform committee); from 11am Kai Töpfer (quality management, Faculty of Philosophy)

Minutes: Jule Nowoitnick

>> Fachrat is in quorum

*Explanation: The meeting was held in German. For the minutes to be readable for all staff and students of the MATS the minutes are in English.*

### Top 1 – Welcome and confirmation of last meeting's minutes

- Joachim Kurtz opens the session and adds three topics to the agenda: confirmation of last meeting's minutes, formal election of speaker of the Fachrat and varia
- In last meeting's minutes Nowoitnick will change ‚Studienkommission‘ to ‚Studienkommission of the Faculty of Philosophy‘ and circulate the revised minutes.

### Top 2 – Formal Election of the Fachrat's speaker (Fachratssprecher)

- Kurtz explains that he was selected as de facto speaker as Brosius and Fuess could not attend the last meeting.
- Fuess is elected unanimously as the speaker of the MATS Fachrat and conducts the meeting.

### TOP 3 – Current Issues

- To ensure a structure for the programme, the Fachrat decides that also in the future the **colloquium** will only be offered in the summer term to be attended by students to graduate either in that summer term or in the following winter term.
- It is decided that the submission deadlines for writing samples within the colloquium are kept but that students who will not submit their thesis in the summer term are – in consultation with their supervisor – free to submit not a chapter of their future thesis but, e.g., a revised proposal or literature review.
- A **questionnaire** asking students to state their term of graduation and reasons for a possible extension, as proposed by Fuess, is legally not possible as the Terms and Regulations of Examination do not limit the overall study time; only deadline set: students have to register two weeks after their last ‚Schein‘-date.
- What would be possible is an anonymous, statistic evaluation to allow optimization of the administrative processes.
- The Fachrat decides that in cases where a thesis topic requires this, both **readers may be non-HCTS professors**.
- Per the Terms and Regulations of Examination the first supervisor („Betreuer“) must chair the oral examination; to avoid MATS students being examined by the standards of an external supervisor's own study programme, Fuess will prepare an information sheet on the MATS oral exam.

- The Fachrat decides that **lecturers teaching in the MATS generally should have a PhD** in hand. Exceptions, e.g. for specialized technical topics, are possible upon request by the responsible professor and to be decided by the Fachrat.
- For doctoral candidates to gain teaching experiences, co-teaching is preferred. If they do not hold a position at university, they need to be offered a teaching contract (“Lehrauftrag”).
- The Fachrat discusses the border between proof reading of one’s paper by a native speaker versus copy editing. The latter is obviously highly problematic.
- It is proposed that academic writing/good academic practice is offered as mandatory tutorial for new students. (see also Top 5 - course planning)

#### **Top 4 – Changes to Programme Structure**

- Fuess **suggests for seminars to be worth 10 credit points instead of 7** as this would reduce the work load for the students (one critique by students) and class size at the same time.
- Meyer agrees that 7 appear too few for actual work load so the increase in points could be explained to the Studienkommission; a change would need to take into account students having started in the old system.
- The Fachrat agrees that a standardization through the faculty / university would be good but not realistic.
- The Fachrat decides that students majoring in the MATS **may replace one of the six mandatory MATSA seminars of terms 1-3 through two seminars with reduced credits.**
- Students thus have two options for their course work:
  - (1) six MATS seminars worth 7 credit points
  - (2) five MATS seminars worth 7 credit points + two MATS seminars with reduced credits
- The Introduction to Transcultural Studies is still mandatory with 7 credit points; the import slots remain to be filled through various courses depending on the interest of the student and the options available at the host institute.
- Points for further discussion: abolition of oral examination; joint degree option; frame of study foci

#### **TOP 5 – Course Planning**

- Zara Barlas could take on a 50% position (quality funds) for academic writing in English for one year so two classes (one weekly, one blocked) plus open writing sessions can be offered.
- Due to the time-lines of their projects a number of JGL request to teach blocked seminars – the Fachrats allows this.
- Generally, permanent staff is still supposed to teach on a weekly basis.
- In the winter term 2015/16 the Introduction to Transcultural Studies will be taught by Joachim Kurtz and Christiane Brosius; SEG-part to be possibly taught by Christian Förster.

#### **TOP 6 – Q+Ampelverfahren (with Dr. Kai Töpfer)**

- Töpfer is welcomed by Fuess and asked to explain the **further procedure**
  - o 7-10 days before the meeting on June 22 we will receive a list of topics for discussion by the SBQEs (members of the university’s internal evaluation committee)
  - o Meeting on June 22 is meant for open, also self-critical discussion with the SBQEs to find solutions for possible problems together

- at the beginning of the meeting we will have approx. 10 minutes to present the MATS; SBQEs will know little about it so also the interdisciplinarity, internationality and other structural specialties of the programme (e.g. research professorships also linked to other institutes) should be explained
- at the end of the meeting there will be a separate discussion between the SBQEs and the student representatives from the MATS
- we should receive minutes soon after the meeting; the detailed results and recommendations probably in the semester break
- within two weeks we have the chance to object to specific points through Töpfer
- otherwise we have until approx. Feb 2016 to formulate a response paper and a catalogue of actions to integrate the recommendations
- the prorector will receive both our statement and the recommendation by the SBQEs to make the decision about the MATS' evaluation
- we will then have three years to put the plans into reality and submit a report on our progress
- in seven years the cycle would begin anew
- should the MATS be put on 'red', it would go into an audit next term
- Töpfer explains that in comparison to other study programmes, the MATS has a lot of yellow in the preliminary results; reason for concern: 54% of students are disappointed in the programme
- He recommends that we have a close look into the study programme evaluation

#### **Walk-Through of Documentation**

- Pages 4-5, points 1. – 2. (qualification goals, module book): mostly a question of formality; Töpfer suggests to start revising immediately
- Problematic that a third of the courses have not been evaluated; next chance for full evaluation again in winter 2015/16, mandatory every two years
- Page 7, point 4.1. (work load in comparison to other study programmes too high): Fuess explains the above discussed idea of reducing the number of courses per term by raising the credits
- Page 8, point 4.7. (going abroad without needing to extend study time): SBQEs will need contextualization (exchange agreements? Learning agreements for better planning?); more detailed feedback by students needed
- Page 9, 5.1. (not enough classes/lecturers): we would need to explain that the evaluation fell into summer 2014 where 4/5 professors were absent
- Page 9, 5.2. (too many participants, rooms not good; work stations needed): Fuess explains that CATS should solve the problems, also of the student meeting room
- Nowoitnick contextualizes the feedback as in the term before there had been two over-crowded seminars, by now situation much better; students confirm this; only problem being Introduction in 212 – idea to move lecture to bigger lecture hall.
- Page 11, 7.3. (prompt checking on exams): Fuess explains newly established deadlines for grades (15.4. and 15.10.); might also be a question of feedback; coordinator as ombudsperson to act for students.
- Page 11, 7.3. (deadlines for exams): would maybe need more detailed feedback from students; grade deadlines require earlier submission deadlines; transparent course requirements meant to allow better planning; students confirm that this already works.
- Page 11, 7.3. (dates for exams): duty to provide those; Meyer and Hoffmann cannot understand the critique; possibly also due to exceptional circumstances of summer term 2014.
- Page 12, 7.5. (modules not well connected): might lie in breadth of the study programme; might need optimization

- Page 14, 8.1. (applied qualifications): Lamers asks how that would work for a research-oriented master; Töpfer asks if students are aware of the MATS being research-oriented; otherwise this would need to be communicated more clearly
- Page 14, 8.2. (mentoring by lecturers): Töpfer sees underlying problem of uniform standards and understanding between teachers
- Fuess explains a general challenge due to our very international student body: some students did their BA in an academic system without term papers so it usually takes them 1-2 terms to practice academic writing.
- While the yellow is spread out through the documentation which will lead to lengthy discussions with the SQBE, Töpfer sees the following main reasons as there seem to be
  - o No clear structure
  - o no clear regulations for the teachers.g. criteria for assessment
  - o communication between teachers and coordination needs to be optimized
  - o clearer information for students and applicants

#### **TOP 7 – Varia**

- Fuess thanks Töpfer for joining the meeting.
- For the next meeting of the Fachrat May 20 (or another date in that week) is suggested.