Terms of Reference: SOAS College of Humanities Critical Pedagogy Group (CoHUM CPG)

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Purpose:

- To serve as a collaborative, experimental space for CoHUM academic staff and CoHUM UG, PGT, and PGR students for investigating ways in which UG and PGT teaching across the CoHUM can be made more innovative and inclusive with regard to gender, race, sexual orientation, economic (dis)advantage, and disability – with particular focus on authentic assessment design, inclusive formative exercises, curriculum organisation, and decolonisation

- To serve as a CoHUM hub of teaching-led research and research-led teaching on inclusive, critical pedagogy

The CPG, significantly, provides CoHUM UG, PGT, and PGR students with a concrete avenue for being active stakeholders in College-, Departmental-, and programme-specific pedagogy. This offers CoHUM students a rare, exciting, deeply meaningful, and employability-enhancing opportunity. The CPG also enables much greater sense of community and shared identity for staff in the CoHUM, which in turn, may play a substantive role in improving CoHUM academic staff morale. For, the CPG is constituted by a supportive and empowering interdisciplinary culture of pooling innovative and inclusive pedagogical expertise and techniques across (artificial) disciplinary boundaries in the humanities.

The CPG is also designed to help realise the School's Education Strategy for 2021-2026 – particularly with respect to

1. Enhancing student learning experience through creating and sustaining decolonial and inclusive pedagogical cultures – such work is central to maintaining and further cementing a key USP of SOAS and the School's identity and global reputation.

2. Establishing communities of practice in the CoHUM, specifically focusing on excellent relational pedagogic cultures and activities that produce and sustain environments in which CoHUM academic staff and students identify as *partners*, and students are entrusted with direct material involvement in pedagogic *praxes* that go beyond Student Evaluation of Modules (SEMs). In this way, student agency is embedded at a substantive executive level in a higher education institution (HEI), enabling them to become more skilful agents for progressive transformative social change.

The CPG's Theory of Change

- Current Conditions
    - Widespread evidence of students reporting that they feel that their voices are not meaningfully heard and listened to in neoliberal HE environments
    - Sizeable award gap between white students and racially minoritised students
    - Sizeable award gap between white working-class students and economically more privileged groups
- Strategies and Actions
    - Developing the CPG's agenda streams in relation to the principal activities (see pp. 4-5)
- Impact
    - Eliminating student experiences of alienation and a range of award gaps
- Vision
    - An HE environment in which i) students report that they feel that their voices are meaningfully heard and listened to in HE environments, and ii) the co-creation of curricula and assessment cultures is normalised and a range of award gaps are not just eliminated but remain eliminated

Position in current Academic Governance

The CPG is a subsidiary of the CoHUM Teaching & Learning Committee.[1]

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[1] The CoHUM Teaching & Learning Committee reports to the CoHUM Management Committee.

Remit: All CoHUM UG and PGT programmes.

Membership:

- 1 Chair[2] – elected from the CPG membership by the CPG members in the summer

- 15 'permanent' staff members:[3]
    - All CoHUM Departmental Learning & Teaching Convenors (x4)[4]
    - All CoHUM Departmental Student Experience Convenors (x4)[5]
    - All CoHUM Departmental Research & Knowledge Exchange Convenors (x4)[6]
    - The CoHUM Learning & Teaching Convenor
    - The CoHUM Research & Knowledge Exchange convenor
    - The CoHUM LTE liaison (Vicki Hart) or another Educational Developer from the LTE

- 16 'non-permanent' members (annual turnover):
    - 4 academic staff across the CoHUM (1 from HRP, 1 from Arts, 2 from the merger of EALC and LCL[7])
    - 4 UG students across the CoHUM (1 from HRP, 1 from Arts, 2 from the merger of EALC and LCL[8])[9]
    - 4 PGT students across the CoHUM (1 from HRP, 1 from Arts, 2 from the merger of EALC and LCL[10])

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[2] Paul Giladi will be Chair for 24/25, just to kick-start things and make everything more streamlined.
[3] After the merger of EALC and LCL, this will become 12.
[4] After the merger of EALC and LCL, this will become 3.
[5] After the merger of EALC and LCL, this will become 3.
[6] After the merger of EALC and LCL, this will become 3.
[7] 1 from Languages; 1 from disciplines.
[8] 1 from Languages; 1 from disciplines.
[9] Membership will not be restricted to any particular year of undergraduate study.
Students from a range of minoritised backgrounds will be actively encouraged to put themselves forward for membership, as the CPG is ultimately designed to make them feel especially at home in HE environments.
[10] 1 from Languages; 1 from disciplines.

- o 4 PhD students across the CoHUM (1 from HRP, 1 from Arts, 2 from the merger of EALC and LCL[11])[12]
- The non-permanent academic staff members can either be nominated by their respective Head of Department or nominate themselves – the key 'criterion' for membership is demonstrating a <mark>clear and evidenced interest in critical pedagogic discourse and critical pedagogic activity</mark>.
  - o Nominations will be submitted to cohumcpg@soas.ac.uk
    - ▪ The 'permanent' members of the CPG will go through nominations and then determine selection.

- UG, PGT, and Year 2 onwards PGR students can either be nominated or nominate themselves. The key 'criterion' for membership is demonstrating a <mark>clear interest in critical pedagogic discourse and critical pedagogic activity</mark>.
  - o Nominations will be submitted to cohumcpg@soas.ac.uk
    - ▪ The Chair and the CoHUM LTC will go through nominations and then determine selection.

CoHUM CPG Chair's Responsibility:

- To organise, convene, and note-take meetings (with an agenda circulated in advance).

- To feedback to the CoHUM Learning and Teaching Committee. (The work of the CPG will then be feedback to the CoHUM Management Committee *via* the CoHUM Learning & Teaching Convenor).

The CoHUM CPG's Principal Activities:

I.   Collaboratively identifying existing innovative and inclusive pedagogical strategies/activities across all CoHUM programmes.

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[11] 1 from Languages; 1 from disciplines.
[12] Not MPhil/PhD – as only from Year 2, following successful upgrade from MPhil, can PhD students start teaching at SOAS.

II. Collaboratively recommending innovative and inclusive pedagogical strategies to the CoHUM Learning and Teaching Committee (and to the CoHUM Management Committee *via* the CoHUM Learning & Teaching Convenor).

III. Organising and hosting an annual 'CoHUM Critical Pedagogy Showcase' highlighting excellence in inclusive pedagogy. From 25/26, the showcase would take place in T1.

The Agenda Streams of the CoHUM CPG:

1) CoHUM Pedagogical Communities:
    a. The College Interdisciplinary Module Development Scheme.[13] (Priority)
    b. The College Sharing Assessments Scheme. (Priority)
    c. The College Sharing Inclusive Pedagogies Scheme. (Priority)[14]
    d. Learning Outcomes Drop-In Sessions[15]
2) CoHUM Advance HE Fellowship Staff Mentor Programme.[16]
3) Impact Surveys on CoHUM Staff Teaching Experience.
4) Impact Surveys on CoHUM Student Experience.

The Overall Benefits of the CPG:

- Would be an especially distinctive USP of the CoHUM and can represent a significant and highly marketable means of college reputation-enhancement –

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[13] The focus is on developing team-taught modules across CoHUM by academic colleagues through a bottom-up approach that coalesces round themes first – e.g. 'The Dynamics of Joy':

W1: Intro – no thematic content
W2: Thematic topic 1 – the nature of joy: interdisciplinary lenses
W3: Thematic topic 2 – phenomenologies of joy
W4: Thematic topic 3 – histories of joy (African and Middle Eastern)
W5: Thematic topic 3 – histories of joy (South Asia and East Asia)
W6: Thematic topic 4 – languages of joy (African and Middle Eastern)
W7: Thematic topic 4 – languages of joy (South Asia and East Asia)
W8: Thematic topic 5 – critical takes on 'happy endings'
W9: Thematic topic 6 – the future of joy: interdisciplinary lenses
W10: Recap/workshop

[14] A significant part of this activity involves updating and maintaining the 'Inclusive Teaching' Moodle page, with specific focus devoted to decolonising humanities curricula.
[15] The Chair and the CoHUM LTC will run several sessions over the academic year for academic colleagues interested developing new module proposals // module amendments.
[16] This will be principally organised and run by the Chair and the CoHUM LTE liaison.

for that matter, success at College-level can (and hopefully should) result in scaling up the CPG to School-governance level.

- o Can help boost CoHUM home and international student recruitment at UG, PGT, and even PGR level.
- o Can help the CoHUM to recruit and retain outstanding academic staff talent.

- Provides a direct route for improving key Learning & Teaching metric scores – e.g. L4/L5 continuation rates, award gaps, NSS scores, and Graduate Outcomes by incubating student-informed approaches in learning and teaching.

- Provides specialised, expert-lead recommendations by staff and students to eliminate (and keep eliminated) awarding gaps, average mark gaps, pass rate gaps, (racialised; gender; first-generation) across CoHUM UG and PG programmes.

- Creates a strong and sustainable community in the CoHUM academic staff cohort of practitioners serving as mentors and assessors for FHEA and SFHEA applications.

- Increases the number of SFHEA and PFHEA staff in the CoHUM.

- Provides a clear and direct framework for more effectively sourcing interest in and producing successful applications to the NTF scheme and to the CATE scheme.

- Enables a much closer and more direct working relationships between CoHUM academic staff and students that forms positive looping feedback relations which, in turn, produce more high-quality research-led teaching and more high-quality teaching-led research.
  - o This also serves to help encourage the unlearning of two sector-wide problematic habits:

- Thinking of teaching as something that academic staff on the Teaching & Research pathway do purely as a contractual duty.
- Thinking of learning & teaching interests and activities as in competition with or even straightforwardly conflicting with academic staff research & enterprise interests and activities.

- Provides CoHUM academic staff on the AER pathway with a clear and demonstrable route for evidencing academic leadership and pedagogic excellence.

Specific Benefits of the CPG for Students:

The CPG's operations produce a number of benefits for students in terms of developing transferrable skills that also significantly enhance their employability. Among these skills are:

- The ability to articulate detailed knowledge about coloniality, decoloniality, critical pedagogy (intellectual and analytical skills)

- The ability to engage in interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary discourse about teaching and learning (intellectual and analytical skills)

- The ability to effectively gather and respond to feedback from multiple stakeholders (research, analytical, technical, and communication skills)

- The ability to collaborate in a multi-stakeholder team (professional skills)

- The ability to develop advanced research skills

Student members of the CPG will receive material renumeration for their vital work in the CPG's operations. Forms of material renumeration include, for example, prize draws and book vouchers.

Workload: The CPG meet four times in the academic year on MS Teams. (2 meetings per semester). Each meeting will last no more than 2 hours. Staff membership will be recognised in WAMS.

Expectations: Members of the CPG should do their best to attend all meetings and meaningfully contribute to e-mail/Teams/meeting discourse about innovative and inclusive pedagogical practice.

If the CPG is eventually scaled up to School Academic Governance level, then the School-wide iteration of the CPG would, in such a scenario, best operate in a position lying at the intersection of the School's various Teaching & Learning Committees and the School's RKE Committee while also acting as a subsidiary of the School's Equality & Diversity Committee. This is because the CPG's interests lie at points in which Education, EDI, and RKE meet.