Overview of Semester, Supervision & Course Evaluations, LISE Fall 2016

Semester Reviews

Reviews of the fall 2016 semester were generally good. Students noted the overall benefit of their study activities as high (94% their benefits as either “very big, big or average”). Comments were also made that the study was more exciting than expected. There were, however, clear complaints about how long it took to receive certain exam results, that there might be more lectures and class meetings and that students were unsure how discussion sessions were supposed to be used. There were also concerns expressed about the internal dynamics of a number of groups, as well as what some perceived as a late placement of exams in the schedule.

It’s important to stress to the teaching staff that assignments should be graded within the normal 4-week period. It’s moreover also necessary to be sure that the educations in the board of studies use all means available to them to provide as many classroom and extra-curricular activities as possible. The board of studies also needs to at least be aware of the fact that several project groups seem to experience internal difficulties and consider how to address such issues, or at least communicate to the students concerning behavioral expectations in the context of group work. Regarding the placement of exams, the practical dimensions of the semester may make alternative placements impossible.

Supervision Reviews

Students were generally content with the supervision process. In general, they were especially satisfied with the content of the supervision – supervisors’ knowledge and ability to help them. There were, however, concerns about supervisors being unavailable at key points in the project process, especially towards the end.

It should be underlined to supervisors that they need to communicate clearly with students about any periods of unavailability and that arrangements should be made at the start of the supervision period to compensate for any potential unavailability.

Course Reviews

Students had many positive senses of the semester’s courses; they were generally perceived as challenging and full of useful information. There were, however, concerns about the breadth of the project courses in the first semester – that there was simply too much material to be covered in the allotted time and that (especially with 20th and 21st Century World History) and that, given that, far too much time was used for discussion and discussing assignments. In relation to the 5th semester, there were many comments that it was difficult to tell what the use of the course “Introduction to Sociology” is and whether it might be substituted with another offering. There were also varied reactions to the language classes (specifically Academic Comm. & Grammar) – some positive, some negative. It seemed, however, that certain of those reactions may concern how comfortable students already are or are not with written and oral work in English.

It is perhaps useful to review the purposes and need for Introduction to Sociology. It should be noted that certain courses in the first semester were new to the teacher(s) involved to cover for another instructor’s absence on a sabbatical semester – wherein covering the precise topic in its precise dimensions in the time allowed may have been new. Regarding language disciplines, teachers are aware of students’ various reactions. However, particular standards must be upheld to the extent that certification of language skills is an important dimension of the program.