

Commission Mixte (CM) Minutes, December 12 2025

Present: Dr. Erzsi Kukorelly, Miranda Althaus, Fatima Belkhodja, Kaan David

Via Zoom: Professor Lukas Erne, Nora Zufferey

Minutes taken by Kaan David

1. Feedback on the BA5 Lecture Course

Students conveyed the sentiment that because they could not always attend in person, they did not have enough time to memorise the material. In response to this, Professor Lukas Erne and Dr. Erzsi Kukorelly explained that the lectures are not recorded by choice, as attending in person is seen as an essential part of the learning experience and not something that can be replaced by distance learning. Additionally, The course is offered in both semesters and in different time slots to give students flexibility. Success in the test mainly depends on attending lectures, taking good notes, and reading the required texts. One lecture is also set aside to explain clearly what is expected for the test, which is designed to assess understanding rather than to trick students.

2. Clarification of MA English Entry Requirements

An issue was addressed with the department website and the Plan D'étude for the master's program. It currently states that student can begin their MA in English after completing sixty credits in the BA without specifying that these credits must include both literature and linguistics. This lack of precision can lead to confusion for students. The response indicated that it would be possible to update the information to make the requirements clearer and more complete.

3. Staff Medical Leave and Teaching Adjustments

This semester has been particularly difficult for the English Department due to several staff members being on medical leave. Susan Mesa reduced her workload significantly, though the positive news is that she is expected to increase her presence again in the spring semester. Professor Simon Swift remains on medical leave and is currently unavailable to teach or respond to emails. As a result, Professor Swift's BA6a lecture planned for the spring semester may not go ahead as originally intended, and alternative arrangements have therefore been made.

After discussions with the Décanat, a replacement BA6a lecture and a BA6b seminar were approved. There is also hope that Maria Peters, who is also on medical leave, may be able to teach a BA6b seminar. To ensure continuity, Dr Sangam MacDuff, who has been covering the BA1 lecture course, has agreed to teach a lecture on 'Modernist Literature' and a seminar on 'James Joyce's *Epiphanies*'. If Professor Swift is able to return, his teaching will come on top of Dr MacDuff's.

4. Student Enrolment Numbers

Student numbers have returned to expected levels, with around 75 students instead of 50 last year. However, Faculty-wide enrolment numbers have dropped by about 100 overall. In this context, the English department is one of the few departments with stable and healthy student numbers.

5. Theft Incident at the Comédie Building

There was a theft in the Comédie building, where a personal belonging was stolen from someone's office. Everyone is asked to remain vigilant and avoid leaving items unattended.

6. New Staff and Research Appointments

Devani Singh has been awarded a prestigious five-year research grant from the Swiss National Fund under the *Starting Grant* scheme, which will allow her to hire two postdoctoral researchers, Jordan and Elena, to work on her project. They will be based in the department from January, and teaching will not be compulsory for them.

7. Cancellation of the Christmas Party

Doctor Erzsi Kukorelly announced that they will sadly be no Christmas party this year, as many people are overstretched and it would not be feasible, particularly for Susan Mesa, who is usually involved in the organisation. Despite these challenges, the department has continued to function normally thanks to everyone pitching in when needed.

8. Addenda from Doctor Erzsi Kukorelly

1: As Maria Peters is on sick leave, she was replaced this semester by Nora Zufferey, at the invitation of Erzsi Kukorelly.

2: There were no agenda items received from the CCER. Dr Erzsi Kukorelly and Nora Zufferey sent an email to their colleagues to ask if they had anything for the *Commission mixte*.