

**School of Geography**

**Minutes of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught  
Student Staff Liaison Committee held on Wednesday 20th May 2020  
at 14.00- 15.00 via MS Teams**

**Staff Members present**

<b>Dr Philippa Williams (PW) (Co-Chair)</b>	Senior Tutor
Catherine Mills (CM) (Secretary)	Student Experience and Admissions Administrator
Prof Alastair Owens (AO)	Head of School
Dr Emily Lines (EL)	Deputy Director of Education
Dr Stuart Grieve (SG)	Engagement, Retention and Success lead
<i>Kate Amis</i>	<i>Minuting meeting</i>

**Student members present**

<b>Deanna Emeny (Co-Chair)</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Environmental Science
William Robertshaw (WR)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year BA Geography
Rianno McFarlane Thomas (RM)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year BSc Geography

1. **Welcome** from PW and DE who jointly chaired the meeting.
2. **Apologies** received from Tim Brown and Martin Beeston
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.**

**4. Matters arising from the previous meeting and action**

Minute	Who?	Details	Action to date as reported Green= complete Orange= in progress and to be reported next meeting Red =Awaiting action/ roll over
2020:28	PW and CM	Create videos on current situation re weightings etc	It was decided that FAQs were a more appropriate format in the time available and these have been uploaded to the QMPLUS page at <a href="https://www.qmul.ac.uk/geog/geography-coronavirus/faqs—for-current-students/">https://www.qmul.ac.uk/geog/geography-coronavirus/faqs—for-current-students/</a>

**5. Well being check and pastoral support**

**5.1 ECs and late summer re-sit/ first- sit period:** The end date to submit final coursework is 2pm on 18<sup>th</sup> May. Anyone who has not submitted will be given a first- sit. CM is only responding to special ECs. All ECs will be accepted until 1<sup>st</sup> June.

RT asked if the drop box would close soon. PW replied that yes it would and after it had closed those trying to submit would be sent a holding email by ES. CM added that if for any reason the drop box had accepted your submission after the deadline then students would need to save their work and then re-submit it later in the summer once the box was re-opened.

## **6. Teaching and Learning and Learning resources**

**6.1 Library updates.** These updates on referencing skills and new online facilities were circulated subsequent to the meeting as follows

Library Subject Guide to School of Geography.

<https://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/subject-guides/geography/> Find, and access, books, databases, high-quality websites and other specialist electronic resources.

Find it! Use it! Reference it! module on QMplus.

<https://qplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6819> This module introduces students to Information Literacy Skills, enabling them to find and evaluate information sources that are appropriate for academic study, and then use and manage them effectively in their work.

RDF Information Literacy Skills for Researchers module on QMplus.

<https://qplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=8599> This module has been designed to help postgraduate and early career researchers extend and refine their information literacy skills. The module covers literature searching, planning and carrying out an effective literature review and managing information.

Library Services during COVID 19 webpage. <https://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/library-services-during-covid-19/> Provides links to a range of resources, services and support.

## **7. Communication**

A wide range of issues were raised and responded to at the meeting as follows:

**IGS:** WR asked that when a student's feasibility comes back as being very difficult to use due to COVID restrictions will it have to be scrapped? AO responded that staff are looking at each proposal and feasibility as separate parts. Staff would traffic light the feasibility so that specific problematic issues could be adjusted.

**Weighting of each year of study clarification:** RT asked for clarification Re: If Yr 2 is to be discounted how this would work. EL responded that this would then be weighted as 1:0:6

**Advice available on the location of teaching and learning for the next academic year to help students with planning accommodation needs:** WR reported that several peers had reported that landlords were trying to get students to renew leases for next year and this was causing a great deal of stress. AO replied that due to pressures of retaining our overseas student cohort QMUL had been very pragmatic in their communications approach

regarding when campus -based learning will resume. He confirmed that in SOG we are planning to deliver online in the autumn term and that whilst we are not 100% clear yet on the reality or quantity of the face to face provision to be offered alongside, any face to face provision, if it does take place, will be in smaller groups in bigger rooms. He reported that training was being provide to staff to upgrade the online teaching provision. WR asked if there would be assurance for students who can't get back from other countries i.e. that they would not be missing out. AO assured that the online would be the core and that face to face would be optional, and in his opinion, would be minimal. Microsoft Teams would be the platform and people would be using that. It would be a blended approach. We are currently uncertain about Semester B teaching location and this will not be clear until the autumn term. This will depend on a potential 2<sup>nd</sup> peak of infections, the availability of testing and vaccines etc.

EL asked if there was anything to be done in terms of providing a date from which students could confirm their requirements with landlords etc

**Action:** AO to ask for clarity on a date for students to be able to clarify their plans with landlords.

**Concerns and challenges about returning to campus-based learning:** RW raised issue that some students may have care responsibilities at home so may not be able to come back in person.

EL asked if the university is committing that online learning will be available for the whole year. AO said that this is most likely but not yet a commitment.

RW asked that if students do need to attend on campus will they be able to have meetings and lectures at less busy times for public transport etc? AO replied that QMUL will be extending the working day to 8am – 9pm. PW commented that tutorials would be timetabled outside rush hour times and that Microsoft Teams would be an alternative for everyone.

**PG courses:** AO reported that some PG courses would start in January instead of September. PW added that we would soon have more news on this to report.

**Student finance:** RT asked if university would be advising students regarding student finance for the next academic year. CM said that this would be covered in the comms sent out by Alex Henshaw for new students.

**The buddy scheme and making connections:** CM had emailed existing students asking them to sign up for the buddy scheme and asked reps to encourage others to sign up. WR reinforced this as he had buddied three people so far and said how helpful it can be, especially in clarifying the message around remote learning in semester A. AO added that the positive message here is that all will be safer. PW acknowledged that the social side will be different and asked how we will reach out to 1<sup>st</sup> Yrs and re connect with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years in September. CM said that welcome week plans are currently unknown and said that in a future SSLC we will be looking for ideas for virtual welcome week.

**1. AOB**

No additional items were raised.

**2. Date of next meeting**

Weds 3<sup>rd</sup> June - time to be advised.

Summary of actions to be carried forward		
2020:29	AO	AO to ask for clarity on a date for students to be able to clarify their plans with landlords.