

School of Geography Undergraduate and Postgraduate Staff-Student Liaison Committee

Wednesday 25th March 2020 3-4:30pm

Held on *Microsoft Teams* as video meeting

Staff Members present

Dr Philippa Williams (PW) (Co-Chair)	Senior Tutor
Catherine Mills (CM) (Secretary)	Student Experience and Admissions Administrator
Dr Tim Brown (DH)	Director of Education
Prof Alastair Owens (AO)	Head of School
Andrew Loveland (AL)	PS manager SOG
Kate Amis	Minuting meeting

Student members present

Deanna Emeny (Co-Chair)	3 rd Year Environmental Science
Aminah Ossman (AYO)	1 st Year Geography with Business Management
Dominik Nagel (DN)	2 nd Year Geography with Business Management
Joseph Brown (JB)	3 rd Year Geography with Business Management
Sophia Fassbender (SF)	PGT Geography joint Honours
Rianno McFarlane Thomas (RM)	2 nd Year Physical Geography
Tilly Wood (TW)	3 rd Year Environmental Science with business Management

1. **Welcome** from PW and DE who jointly chaired the meeting.
2. **Apologies for absence** received from Mimo Moyo, Shazia Sadiq
3. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting**: The minutes were approved
4. **Matters arising and action points from the previous meeting**:

Minute	What?	Who?	Action to date as reported Green= complete Orange= in progress and to be reported next meeting Red =Awaiting action/ roll over
2020:001	PW to update next SSLC about initiative to include inbox management and email etiquette in UG/PG learning. Carried over from SSLC (2019:020), (2019:29) and (2019:39)	PW	Ongoing
2020:002	RE to update on the new Library catalog due to launch in July 2020	RE	Ongoing
2020:003	CM and PW/DE to look into the requirements of being a CRep	CM /PW	There is an expectation that reps will attend

		/DE	meetings
2020:004	CM to ensure that for next academic year CourseRep profiles and contact details are ready to be distributed to lecturers. C reps given deadline of end of Reading week to send these to CM	CM & CReps	Profiles have been distributed
2020:005	CReps to ask for feedback on feedback sheets again	CReps	This is still to be done. There is a positive feel about the new feedback sheets but need to collect these in
2020:006	TB to explore how to facilitate individualised feedback Carried over from SSLC (2019:046)	TB	Current circumstances have made this more urgent though this will be dealt with for 2021 by the new strategies
2020:007	CM to ask SA if we could include a banner on QMplus about the Graduate Attributes.	CM to SA	Awaiting action
2020:008	PW to take GEG4003 being compulsory for all first year programmes to TLC	PW	Awaiting action
2020:009	CM to speak with Serena about where the survey goes that is completed when students re enrol	CM to Serena	Awaiting action
2020:010	CM to speak with SA to execute a CRep SSLC forum	CM to SA	Ongoing
2020:011	CReps to email library@qmul.ac.uk regarding exact locations of mess in the library	CReps	No action taken/ action abandoned
2020:012	CM to speak with Advice and Counselling about having an online booking form	CM to ACS	This is being done as part of current COVID situation and is likely to be confirmed for next year

5. Wellbeing check and pastoral support

PW expressed her best wishes and hoped everyone was doing OK.

5.i Sub optimal working conditions as result of COVID lockdown - DE reported that many students are having to deal with hectic, crowded and sub optimal conditions for studying due to COVID lock down. DE added her concerns about impact of current conditions on quality of work being produced.

Response AL – Students should get in touch with us if they are struggling with equipment etc

Response AO – The hardship fund is being increased

Response AO - We can adjust marks in line with previous years trends etc. We are actively discussing assessment at present. We will be transparent about the marking criteria

adjustments etc. We want all our students to do well. The staff will do all they can in their power to support all students fairly.

5.ii Can we do a survey to assess the scale of disruption? JB asked if CM could do this through QMPLUS to all students

Response- CM. Yes will do this.

Action CM – put survey on QMPLUS / action 2020:13

5.iii Evidence for ECs at current time – TW raised issue that it is difficult at current time to provide evidence for ECs due to problems accessing Health service support/ paperwork.

Response CM – DDS said they may be able to offer an email as evidence if someone has a registered mental health/ physical health issue. We will update students when we know more about the EC process and supporting evidence.

Action CM – update students on the EC process / action 2020:14

6. Teaching and Learning and Learning Resources

6.1 Quality of online content and ease of use of technologies

6.1.i GEG6143: JB raised concerns about the quality of the lecture content provided to students who had reported concerns that they felt these were insufficiently robust to enable them to complete the essays for the modules. Specifically, they found the lack of PowerPoint slides challenging and reported low levels of student engagement.

Action: AO would be meeting with CS to resolve teaching format issues as part of regular mentoring schedule.

Action JB to summarise detail in an email direct to AO / Action 2020:15

6.1.ii GEG6137: JB raised issue that students would prefer not to be reverted to last years recorded lectures but would prefer lecture given within the allotted timetable time frame and the opportunity to ask questions at that time.

Response TB will think again about changing tactics. But reiterated that students have in the meantime got full slides from last year and opportunity to ask questions to him as lecturer at any time.

6.1.iii Marking criteria/ grade boundaries for coursework in general. JB asked if these would now reflect the reality that many students would face more challenging studying conditions with less suitable conditions for completing work available to them during the lockdown

Response TB – academic staff would be expected to take account of the issues. The EC process is there, and we encourage students to use it. We have made significant adjustments as a result of both the strike and COVID. The period of Grace has been extended to 14 days and no penalties will be applied for using this.

6.1.iv GEG 5231/GEG6231 Fragile Environments – TW asked for clarifications on expectations around level of participation in what would have been F/W week. She reported that students had yet to receive online learning materials for this module yet and were concerned about being able to cover the content.

Response AO – For all F/W modules staff would be expected to create activities for three days in the week. These activities would be based around online research and assignments would be due late April.

Response TB – We are all learning as we go. Please do keep feedback coming. We are all in this together.

Response AO – One thing to take from this is how important communications are

Response TW- Yes keeping students informed is key even where work is in progress.

6.1.v New York F/W assignment – DN expressed feedback of confusion around nature of assessment for the F/W course. Was it just to be a 2,000 word assignment?

Response AO- Yes it would be a literature review worth 50% . Practical element now replaced with a report for the remaining 50%

6.1.vi First year feedback: AYO reported that feedback from first years was generally positive on the quality and quantity of material they were receiving. In some cases, they had been able to have longer sessions as no constraint of room timetable etc online!

6.1.vii GIS technologies in GEG 5223. RM reported that there is concern amongst many students about coursework in this module as they don't have Arc GIS software and it is hard to get it to work on home computers.

Response AO – The understanding is that the final assessment is being adjusted so that it does not require access to Arc GIS.

6.1.viii General response from students to Live Online lectures RM reported that students had been liking the live lectures rather than the pre recorded ones. Also, tutorials had been going well, Students were more likely to contribute even though overall the attendance has been less good. RM felt it was better to be all engaged with the same activity at the same time. DE commented that the live lectures helped to give structure in people's lives. JB said that with live lectures you can still watch it again afterwards too.

6.1.ix Access to materials for lectures cancelled due to strike. TW asked if it is possible to have access to last year's lectures in the event that a lecture had been cancelled this year due to the strike. Even though this material may not be required for assessments etc it would be helpful to have the benefit of this knowledge and skills.

Response AO This would be at the discretion of the academic.

Action AO will ask but will not instruct staff to consider this/ Action 2020:16

6.1.x IGS proposal support. DN raised issue that not all tutors have been as engaged with supporting development of IGS proposals.

Response PW – There is to be a tutorial in this respect this week and PW will be touch with DN regarding this

6.2 Experience of group discussions and any group work- see comments recorded in 6.1

6.3 Assessment/ progression changes

6.3.i : Online invigilated exams - JB asked about rumours about online invigilated exams this summer

Response AO – There will be none whatsoever of these in geography

6.3.ii : Assessment – JB asked for clarification regarding if the credit weighting of modules affected whether they could be selected as the worst modules to be ignored / discounted for final end of year grades. TW asked that if the IGS was the worst credits would this be eligible to be the credits discountable ?

Response AO- Yes, the IGS would be eligible to be discounted.

Response PW - When students have more weight in semester 2 this has been disadvantageous this year and must be born in mind

Action CM to ask Lisa Belayea to clarify regarding new rules on assessments/ Action 2020:17

6.3.iii Grade transcript: SF asked about how to get grade transcripts for progression/ employability.

Response AO- We would usually only be offering non- moderated grades at this time of year. In that respect this year is no different. Advised to ask the person who would be your dissertation tutor as they can do this for their students.

6.3.iv Weighting of year one in overall degree classification. AYO reported that 1st years are asking for further clarity about how the breakdown of Yrs 1/2/3 would make up the final degree result now that it has been announced that, for this year ,a first year's results are to be discounted from the overall degree result

Response AO – this can possibly be offered as a 'whichever is best for each student' solution. If they would be disadvantaged by discounting their first year then it would still be included but if it would disadvantage them to include it then it will be discounted. This issue will be discussed by the exam group at university level and there should be a decision in a few weeks.

6.4 Support from Advisors

DE reported positive feedback on how this is working. RM reported that in 2nd year advisors had been helpful and good at getting back to students

7. Organisation and Communication

7.1.i In relation to the strike: TW- Overall for Yrs 1/ 2 and 3 the strikes have impacted students' learning. TW had been in touch with the principal's office re issue of a partial refund of tuition fees and was disappointed by the lack of engagement in this issue. She did not get a reply to her email. Only one of five people who TW knows ,who have also written to the Principal, have had a reply on this issue.

Action - AO will follow up on this concern and lack of response / Action 2020:18

DE- Though many students are empathetic with academics on the issue behind the strike we have missed months of teaching and this should be recognised by financial compensation

SF- For one-year masters students this has been especially difficult as such a large proportion of our year has been missed.

RM - For second years esp when they have taken the bulk of their courses in the second semester this has created greater problems. For example, with short courses as we weren't given information about whether these courses were running.

Action – PW will follow this up with Lisa B to make sure students are not penalised on these short courses/ Action 2020:19

7.1.ii In relation to the strike and to the COVID lockdown RM reported that students with DDS etc are concerned how this will affect their grades/ marking/ outcome. How flexible can the system be?

Response PW- please get in touch if you have concerns. Reminder that advice and feedback hours are being done online

Response CM- We will try to be as fair as possible. We can help students over the 'phone or on video calls.

7.1.iii Email volume JB requested that the volume of emails to students be reduced because much of the content currently is repetitious. From both Sch of Geog, School of Business and Principals office etc. He had like the email from LB when she had put key points at top of email in bullet points and then detail below.

Response CM – it is important to read emails from both schools as there may be subtle differences in approach etc

Response AL – we are compiling an FAQ page and will be trying to move more to these. Acknowledging that too many emails can be over whelming.

Response AO – We appreciate that volume of emails can be difficult but our priority at present is to keep everyone informed in this fast -changing situation.

7.2 Module registration reminder – no comments

8. CourseRep feedback from their peers – incorporated into sections 5, 6 and 7

CM would continue with new plan to send out a reminder to all students one week in advance of the next SSLC asking them to send comments to their reps

Action CM to send out reminders to all students prior to next SSLC to prompt feedback and questions for reps / Action 2020:20

9. AOB - CM was congratulated by AO and AL for achieving the award of Professional services staff member of the year. This award was across the whole university. Congratulations to Catherine on a well-deserved award.

10. Date of the next meeting: TBC .

Response AO -advised that university is advising SSLC to meet again in two weeks time.

Summary of action points from this meeting		
	Who?	Details
2020:13	CM	CM to create survey and put on QMPLUS
2020:14	CM	CM to update students on the EC process
2020:15	AO JB	AO would be meeting with CS. JB to summarise detail in an email direct to AO
2020:16	AO	AO to ask if lecturers willing to provide access to materials for lectures cancelled due to strike
2020:17	CM	CM to ask Lisa Belaya to clarify regarding new rules on assessments and which could be discounted etc
2020:18	AO	AO to follow up on lack of response to student enquiry from principal's office
2020:19	PW	PW to follow up with Lisa B to make sure students are not penalised on short courses.
2020:20	CM	CM to send out reminders to all students prior to next SSLC to prompt feedback and questions for reps

Plus the additional points carried forward as follows

2020:005	CReps to ask for feedback on feedback sheets again	CReps
2020:006	TB to explore how to facilitate individualised feedback Carried over from SSLC (2019:046)	TB
2020:007	CM to ask SA if we could include a banner on QMplus about the Graduate Attributes.	CM to SA
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