

# LLM SSLC Remote Meeting Minutes

9<sup>th</sup> April 2020 12:00



## Participants

**Chair:** Anne Flanagan (AF), Angelos Dimopoulos (AD) LLM Directors

**Staff:** Sue Sullivan (LLM Co-ordinator), Abigail Myers (QMplus), Bhavesh Chowhan (I.T), Richard Evans (Librarian), Gaetano Dimita (Lecturer IP), Laura Edgar, Michelle Dean ( Programme Co-ordinator Distance Learning, International Programmes, MSc Law and Finance, LLM Law and Economics), Professor Rodrigo Olivares-Caminal (Chair in Banking and Finance Law), Jack Osbourne (Assessments & QA Administrator) Pia Cronin (Secretary)

**Students:** Harshit Gupta, Zhirou Li , Giulia Chiesa, Tomas Daniel Rodriguez Correa, Pierre Emile Ostercamp, Nouf Aljahdali, Praise Chime, Shenae Cunningham, Thanyathorn Danwiboon, Pinar Demiralp, Grigorios Fylaktou, Lauren Holmes, Liska Hutchinson, Krishan Insan, Ashutosh Jagdhane, Sarah, Kadzviti Munyegera, Laavanya Kaushik, Ramzi Khoury, Wanxing Li, Jan Loobuyck, Suraj Machimanda , Klaudia Marat, Fathimathu Muhammed, Oluwatomisin Ogunniran, Subhash Sagar, Ezgi Gizem Turan, Anastasia Vareltzi, Swen Yee Yap, Yi Zhou, Akbar Badusha Mohammed, Ali Zinna

**Apologies:** Thanyathorn Danwiboon

## Preliminary Items

- Welcome, introductions and purpose of meeting

**Chair**

Anne Flanagan welcomed everyone and explained that the meeting has been organised to check on how students were getting on working remotely.

## Areas for Discussion

### 1. Wellbeing check with the reps joining the meeting.

Students were invited to share how they are managing their current situations, letting the group know where they were and whether they were alone or with family. Ten students shared their thoughts, half of which had managed to return overseas, half were still in or around London with family or alone, only one student was still in University accommodation. The following advice was offered by **AF** and **AD**:

- **AF** advised that since term had ended just a week or two ago, it is a good time to focus on study. Although this is might be difficult in the current situation it is important.
- **AD** said that Advice and Counselling is still operating for those who need it. There is a link to support on the following link <https://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/emotional-wellbeing/support-during-the-coronavirus-situation/>
- **AF** suggested that for dissertations working in online writing workshops with fellow students could be helpful to get you started or over a hurdle, something which the PhD students do. Perhaps doing study groups, creating a structure for revision could help people focus.
- **AF** noted that there are available workshops online for meditation and focus as well as other coping mechanisms for anxiety. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZToicYcHIQU>,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KW5N\\_IYw4tQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KW5N_IYw4tQ),  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2\\_xi29Mq4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2_xi29Mq4)

- **AF** that if you sharing a home with a family and have difficulty to focus, consider studying outside of hours eg, perhaps getting up early or find a way to reduce the interruption, eg, using sound reducing headphones.

## 2. Quality of the online content: the forms of e-learning in use, any IT issues etc.

**AF** explained that people have had to move very quickly from face-to-face to online teaching and so we welcome feedback on the experience, things that worked things that were not so great and how things have improved.

- **Pierre Ostercamp (PO):** Some students in International Finance Law Applied have said that a lot of reading list is not available online and so students have asked for PDF of books but have had no response from lecturer. Risk Management in Law, a lot of the materials are not available online which is not so much a problem but they have had only two lecture recordings out of five. Students union said students should be able to expect as a minimum recordings of lectures. She has offered video meetings.
- **AF asked PO to email the reading list so that she could follow up**
- **AD** said that a number of publishing houses are making some things online, some details available on the Library website.
- **Richard Evans (RE)** – There are some free resources and the library has compiled a list of those. The Library Services in COVID 19 page has much information, including about loans, holds and fines as well as links to available resources. While the School of Law is particularly proactive with regards to Library and resources, there will be cases where books won't be available as eBooks and so it may be a case that academics have to find an alternative.
  - <https://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/library-services-during-covid-19/>
  - <https://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/e-resources-news-and-help/covid-19-resources-made-available-by-publishers/>
- **AF** suggested that with honed word search terms for your topic look in Google Books and then the search within the book. That can to maximise the amount of text you see in Google. **AF** also said that with Amazon Prime (free to students?) has a "Look inside" this book feature that can make many more pages available to view. There are still limits.
- **AD** asked if people who have moved back home, outside of UK, had difficulty accessing materials as it had been mentioned as a student concern.
- **RE** said that very few resources online are not available outside of the UK. The Library does support global access routinely. Sometimes You Tube videos are not available in China – CoVid 19 library page.

## 3. Ease of use of the technologies

**AF** invited students to feedback on how IT has worked in practice for the online teaching.

- **Shennae Cunningham (SC)**
  - Designs in IP** – students would have preferred online lectures but they did appreciate what was recorded.
  - IP and Life Sciences** – There were Interactive classes and help with essays – recorded but they were effective and of high quality
  - Commercialisation of IP** – There were some recordings but not sufficient – a lot of readings cannot be accessed because they are books (SC said that following earlier point she will now

refer them to the library)

**Art and IP** – This course didn't have any online lectures and students feel that simply going through the readings are insufficient. There was one recording from 2018 but it was of poor quality. In response **Gaetano Dimita (GD)** – Explained that there was a guest speaker second week of lockdown who couldn't come back so the only way was to upload from last year. Last week a tutorial and a session was given on teams to cover and deal with essays.

**Trademarks** – There were no online interactions with professor. Students feel they have been severely affected by lockdown, they feel they have missed a whole bit of law they wouldn't be taught. There was one 45 min recording uploaded. Students have received 40 emails in the last 18 days for this course, which they feel is impossible to follow. Module announcements are made by email, in two days students received six emails per day. However they have had no lectures and no tutorials so found it confusing? **GD said he would raise the email issue with class academic.**

**Music industry contracts** – The lecturer really tried with courses and tutorials online and guest lecturer also online.

- **Lauren Holmes (LH)** – Lauren explained that one student was flying back to Greece and so missed the lecture – it would be helpful if all lectures were recorded for such reasons – particularly for Wi-Fi drop outs etc.

**AF** asked is Collaborate has worked as a platform for teaching.

- **SC** – collaborate was the most technically difficult – Microsoft teams worked best. Zoom had some problems. Collaborate may be better if there was better skill among staff.
- **Fathimathu Muhammed (FM)** – some lecturers are disconnecting on collaborate – Chris Reed's lecture was great but other subjects have not been so good. Nicholas Lloyd's Dissertations Support sessions on Collaborate had more issues than any other.

**Abigail Myers (AM)** Confirmed that e-learning are working to enhance server capacity for QMplus

**AF** Requested that further comments on this issue should be sent to [pplawoffice@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:pplawoffice@qmul.ac.uk)

#### **4. Experience of group work and group discussions**

Not covered.

#### **5. Experience of online assessments**

**AF** invited discussion on No Detriment Policy (NDP) and other assessment issues. A summary of points made were as follows:

- **AF/Jack Osbourne (JO)** - An email will be released soon with information about the NDP
- **AF** NDP does not need to reflect that of other universities
- **JO** we are still waiting from central services guidance about some issues e.g. part time students.
- **JO** other schools have said that the average won't change but for QM, the average will be based on best 150 credits.
- **SC** for courses that have changed from exams to FAE (especially Trade Marks) – students don't know what to expect.
  - **JO** the format was to answer three out of seven questions for Law of Registered Trade Marks – 4500 word limit with students to decide how to allocate that.

- **AF** the schedule has not generally changed for law – the FAE begins for nearly all modules on the time and day originally scheduled for the allowed 24 hours to submit. Submission should reflect essentially what you could have done in three hours. No bibliography or footnotes are expected.
- **AF** explained the marking criteria is the same (In response to LH) however there is no credit for citing to a specific article or full case citation because you have the resource in front of you.
- **AD** added the criteria is essentially the same as if for a closed book exam but is now and online open book exam, based on the published assessment/marking criteria in the Student Handbook.
- **JO** there is to be a meeting today about using email addresses as a back-up for issues with submission points.
- **AF/JO will ensure that there is guidance about how submission points will work, and hope that email submission will only be used in an emergency situation.**
- **Harshit Gupta (HG)** asked about plagiarism in FAE's will there be any difference in terms of similarity threshold. After some discussion the following points were offered.
  - Staff look not just at the % but at the nature of the text/content. Where there is a high similarity rating, it is not necessarily plagiarism and examiners will look at the specifics of each case. There is no trigger number for a finding of plagiarism.
  - To protect yourself from this, make sure to use quotation marks for words that are taken and provide citation to the source. Don't use block quotes strung together with some sentences in between. Put things in your own words; make sure if using a quotation that it is essential to use those exact words. Be careful how you write things and ensure that you know from where they are taken.
  - Alleged plagiarism offences are addressed by central administration. All students are put on notice that there is an open investigation and should be aware of why there is no grade in MYSIS (there was an extended conversation on plagiarism at the last SSLC meeting)
- **JO** Draft submission points are up and running in modules where students can upload up to three files on draft submission page so that they can see their similarity score and correct any problems before final submission.
- Giulia Chiesa (GC) – Said the three-hour exam for Law and Finance was not enough time. **Rodrigo Olivares-Caminal (ROC)** – This is an issue of School of Economics, they are going for a three-hour exam because they want to replicate the exam experience. The only difference is it is now an open book. It was pointed out that memorising word for word – repeating in exam is still plagiarism.
- **AD** pointed out that if you're asked to give a definition then you are not plagiarising but if not asked to offer a definition then it is. Even if not submitted to Turnitin.
- **Tomas Daniel Rodriguez Correa (TRC)** – LLM Law and Economics raised a question about EC submission and which departments on the joint degree are the point of contact. **JO** clarified that if it is an Economics modules then Economics handle ECS and, Law modules are handled within Laws – it is advised to submit to correct departments and CC in the other.
- **JO** clarified that exam board has been moved back by three weeks, so ECs will probably be addressed three weeks later, too.
- **HG** asked for clarification that failed modules can be condoned from 0 rather than 50
  - **JO** It is part of QM no detriment policy which will be clarified in an email. You can condone up to 30 credits and from 0. Condoned fail means you can still achieve the LLM overall with a fail.
  - **AF** clarified that if you have no more than 30 credits of a fail you will still be awarded the degree.

- **PO** raised an issue where there is discrepancy on the submission point which says word limit for essays is 5000 but they have been told 4000. SOLM236 and SOLM223
  - **JO every module has an individual wordcount. He will investigate why it's been put up incorrectly.**
- In response to **SC**, **JO** clarified that there is a 10% allowance on the word limit above and below with no penalisation. If a student writes above 10% the rest won't be marked.
- **Zhirou Li (ZL)** pointed out there are more submission points than needed on QMPlus. Sue **Sullivan (SS)** explained that this is because we allow auditing – if you are not registered for a module you do not submit. **AD** pointed out that some students have switched from auditing to student status so that they can access recordings – which is why auditing students have extra submission points.
- **AM** explained that in addition E-learning may have switched permissions which is causing a university wide issue.
- **AF** asked if April 24<sup>th</sup> is that the date they will be switch back by. **AM** pointed out that lecturers may forget to switch some students back.
  - **JO will send a reminder to lecturers to switch students back to viewers.**
- **ZL** asked about auditors receiving recognition on their transcripts. **SS** explained that we are looking to give recognition to those who were in attendance prior to lockdown. Students will receive an email informing them of whether they will receive recognition or not.
- **HG and PO** raised concern about the experience of FAE's being exhausting. **JO** confirmed that the timetable will not change. **AF** reiterated that FAE's should not take 24 hours.
  - **ROC** Students will unnecessarily take 24 hours for FAEs but that they should not take that long. The problem explained extensively on Friday with the class and all four course staff– narrative is longer because it is a problem-solving task. They have shortened the amount of words expected for FAE but we cannot control how much time students take. **ROC** asked reps to reiterate to their students original FAE's meant to be 5-6 hours

## 6. Access to library resources and any course-specific software

**LH** spoke of a student in Egypt on the Human Rights Law course who was not able to access the UN and other similar websites. **AF** suggested other students could perhaps photograph pages for him or for him to use a VPN.

## 7. Advising / pastoral support arrangements

Refer to earlier conversations about access to student advice

## 8. Support from academic supervisors on projects / dissertations

To be covered in the next meeting

## A.O.B

**AD** invited discussion regarding Dissertation and supervision

- **SC** asked as there is a reduced access to libraries will the dissertation submission date be revised. **SS** confirmed that it will remain the same.

- **AD** suggested that if students find that there is a lack of dissertation resources, they should discuss with supervisors what might be able to be done via desk research.
- **AF** pointed out that if people have particular difficult situations showing a need, then they can request individual extensions
- **AD** clarified that not everyone is equally affected by this lockdown, some may have more issues than others so extensions and EC may be necessary in some cases

**LH** from Human rights module Sem 1 raised concerns that they still don't have results. **AD** explained that they are aware, it has been an unfortunate combination of Industrial Action and the Lecturer on sabbatical along with the issue of COVID-19. **AD** and **JO** are liaising with lecturer to resolve the issue

**SC** said that given significant change in module delivery and the fact that students are guaranteed a certain number of contact hours, are we considering fees rebates? **AD** said that this issue will be addressed by central college as it is not in the School's control – but it is unlikely to be the case.

**SS** asked if we should hold another meeting in a few weeks to see how things are going with dissertations etc. It was agreed that this would be helpful.

#### **Appendix: Comments submitted outside of meeting.**

##### **Comments from Thanyathorn Danwiboon (apologies sent)**

There are several comments about lecturer using online platform such as Zoom and Collaborate but not providing the recording of the session, and because many students have already returned to their home countries which has drastic time different with the UK, sometimes it is impossible to attend the session. I have asked for specific module name and codes.

- SOLM048 Investment Arbitration (Daniel Behn)
- SOLM126 UK Tax Avoidance
  - in tax module, because I am personally a tax student as well, I have tried communicate with the lecturer myself and he said he misunderstood the function only for the first session, session after that one have all been recorded. The matter is resolved.

Further comment still arise for modules under Prof David Southern, where students find it difficult to reach the lecturer. Dr Schneider has been advised.