

**School of Biological and Chemical Sciences**  
**MSc Student Staff Liaison Meeting**  
Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March – 2:00-3:00pm

Prof Andrew Leitch = Chair  
Natalie Holland = Secretary

**Items for agenda**

**Student support:**

Andrew welcomed the students to the meeting and started the meeting with recognition of what a distressing and unprecedented turn of events they were facing and wanted to reassure students that their health and wellbeing was of paramount importance. He also confirmed that there would be no negative impact of this crisis and the consequent move to remote working on their classification outcomes.

Students were reminded that they could contact Andrew, their programme director and/or Natalie via MS Team or regular email - with any questions or concerns that they currently have.

A range of student support links (below) were shared via Collaborate and students were encouraged to make use of all potential sources of support:

For general support from Advice and Counselling Service:

<https://www.welfare.qmul.ac.uk/emotional-wellbeing/support-during-the-coronavirus-situation/>

For Tier 4 Visa advice:

<https://qmulintadvice.wordpress.com/2020/03/13/coronavirus-covid-19-and-tier-4/>

Managing your mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.studenthealth.qmul.ac.uk/mental-health/covid-19-and-your-wellbeing>

<http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/temporary-remote-working/how-to-promote-positive-mental-health/>

If you think you have symptoms:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

If you need to self-isolate:

1. email [studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk) to report your circumstances.
2. [Studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:Studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk) will log your case and assign a reference number. [Studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:Studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk) will send you the Covid-19 evidence form and reference number.
3. [Studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:Studenthealth@qmul.ac.uk) will send you the Covid-19 evidence form and reference number.
4. You complete EC form as normal (via relevant research project QM+ page) and attach the Covid-19 evidence form as 'medical evidence'.

Interruption (complete the interruption form for the following link):

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/students/study/interrupting/>

Library resources:

<https://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/library-services-during-covid-19/>

In the week that followed the meeting, the following updates to the student support provision have been made:

Advice and Counselling Service:

- Are now offering MS Teams / phone conversations with students typically lasting around 20-30 minutes. These conversations will offer students a supportive dialogue, rather than a counselling session.
- In terms of welfare advice, the advisers are now able to offer students appointments using MS Teams (or the phone) in much the same way as usual.

In the first instance you should refer to the Advice and Counselling webform and the frontline team will respond. Their 'Support during the Coronavirus situation' web page includes lots of information about services and resources supporting mental health and wellbeing at this time.

Immigration Service has also developed a web page about immigration and Covid-19. This includes information for current students and applicants and contains more details than the blog posts.

## **Research projects**

- Students confirmed that they had heard from their supervisor and that they were making progress with their projects, albeit with adjustments in many cases.
- It was also confirmed that project deadlines remain the same
  - Student talks will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> June (most likely via Collaborate)
  - Deadline to submit = Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August.
- More information was to follow about how the project talks will be conducted and it was decided that all were encouraged to attend to support their fellow students to create a mutual learning experience for all and to create a sense of attending a mini conference and that they should see this as a valuable opportunity for networking.
- It was confirmed that there were options for interruption should students feel that is the best course of action. Students are to contact their project supervisor and/or Natalie to discuss their options.
- It was made very clear that students would not be disadvantaged by this crisis and the development of problem-solving skills and adaptability that would need to be employed to get through to the completion of projects puts their achievements in a unique context.
- It was also confirmed that this new way of working would not limit their potential for applying for PhD places. Students were reminded that the processes for being applying for either the NERC scheme or direct application to a primary supervisor were complex and that a key component relates to references. As above, the students working through this phase will be supported via references from project supervisor.

A question was raised about the possibility of a reduction in tuition fees given the change to remote working and need to make considerable adjustments to their research projects but it

was made clear that this would be a decision that would have to be made at Government and then College level.

## **PTES**

Students were reminded that a link to the Postgraduate Teaching Experience Survey (PTES) had been sent to all students and that it would be open until 5<sup>th</sup> June. More information about this survey is available: <http://my.qmul.ac.uk/your-voice/feedback/postgraduate-taught-experience-survey/>. Students were reminded that useful and meaningful conclusions drawn from the survey results were only possible given a high completion rate. It is important to all staff to truly understand the feedback from student to ensure quality of programmes, but this can only be achieved from a high completion rate.

## **Resits**

Students with re-sits were informed that they were waiting for updates (expected by 3<sup>rd</sup> April) for how this would be managed and that students would be informed in due course thereafter.

## **Questions**

There were no further questions.