

**Science and Engineering Foundation  
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee  
Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**Draft minutes**

**Staff members present:**

Dr Hicham Adjali (HA)	Director of Foundation Education for Science & Engineering
Rosie Enobakhare (RE)	Foundation Administrator
Sarahlouise Lawrence (SL)	Foundation Officer
Mark Small (MS)	Timetabling Manager (Science & Engineering)

**Student members present:**

Titilayo Adebuyi (TA)	SEFP (Mathematics)
Zainab Khan (ZK)	SEFP (Biological Sciences)
Yousef Sakka (YS)	ISEFP (Engineering)

**Apologies for absence:**

Karthik Dinavahi (KD)	SEFP (Engineering)
Dennis Singh (DS)	SEFP (Computer Science)
Seif Rashad (SR)	ISEFP (Engineering)
Laura Chappell (LC)	SEFP (Physics)

**Part 1 – Preliminary Items**

<b>1(a)</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2019.016	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
<b>1(b)</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>
2019.017	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 30/10/19.
<b>1(c)</b>	<b>Report on matters arising and actions taken</b>
2019.018	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following: All actions had been dealt with apart from 2019:008, responses from Dr Kreouzis and Prof Dunstan are outstanding.

**Part 2 – Programme Delivery and other matters**

<b>2(a)</b>	<b>Organisation and Communication - Timetabling</b>
2019.019	<b>MS</b> explained that the Foundation timetable has been complicated in the past due to the amount of module options so has been more of a case of fitting activities where they works rather than what is best for students. A

timetabling survey sent out last year to create a more student-friendly timetable however, there were not many responses. **MS** asked the SSLC representatives for any comments or suggestions for the Foundation timetable.

**ZK** and **TA** reported that they did not have any problems with their current timetable. **YS** commented that he had a long gap on Mondays of around 3 hours between session and as he commutes there is not enough time for him to return home. On Fridays, many students attending SEF038 have no other sessions that day so felt it was not worthwhile to attend. This was solved as the session was moved to a Thursday.

**MS** explained that some of the issues the timetabling team were trying to work around included:

- 9am starts and 6pm finishes, especially on the same day
- 3+ hour gaps in the middle of the day
- Only having 1 hour of teaching in a day is being looked at following the survey

**YS** asked if the 3+ hour gaps could be worked into the coding of the timetabling system as a restriction. **MS** noted that that would be the ideal situation, but the more restrictions placed in the timetable makes it more challenging to timetable everything in a student and staff friendly way. **ZK** added that she has a long day with 6-7 hours, which she does not mind but the 9am start is difficult in rush hour. **MS** commented that students want different things. Some students want to have two busy days and the rest of the week empty whereas some students would prefer to have lectures spread out across the week. **ZK** remarked that personally she would prefer busy days as long as there are breaks.

**MS** asked for feedback on the longest length of teaching in a row. 4-hours back to back? **ZK** and **TA** agreed that 4-hours of lectures back-to-back was too long to keep focussed. **MS** noted that as lecture blocks are usually 2-hours long, typically lectures are scheduled with a 2-hour break or 4 hours in a row with two lectures back to back. **ZK** commented that she has 3 hours back-to-back but the first 2-hours are a lecture and the third hour is a tutorial and is more engaging. **YS** added that he has 4-hours straight and finds this ok but can see that it is not suitable for other students.

**MS** asked if academics have breaks during 2-hour lectures? **All representatives** agreed that they had breaks during the longer lectures.

**MS** commented that the timetabling team plan to split the campus into zones so that when students have a back-to-back sessions they will be within the same building or area of campus. By zoning the campus in this way, the aim is to reduce students' travel time between sessions.

**SL** enquired about the timetable use on the QMUL app. **YS** confirmed that the app works well for the timetable and despite some issues at the start of the year, changes are now reflected on the timetable very quickly. **MS** asked how most students access the timetable. **All Representatives** agreed that most students use the app, but some use the online web timetables. **MS** reminded students about the Timetabling survey in Semester B and asked if reps could warn students and encourage them to fill it out.

	<p><b>YS</b> suggested that there might be a higher response rate if students were offered an incentive (e.g. an amazon prime voucher).</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Representatives to help promote and encourage students to complete the Timetabling survey due to be released in February.</p>
	<p><b>Programme/module developments and amendments</b></p>
2019.020	<p>The committee reviewed proposed programme / module developments and amendments. The following feedback was received from student representatives:</p> <p><b>HA</b> explained that SEF038 Introduction to Modern Physics, was due to be withdrawn from Foundation diets from 2020-21. This was a result of student feedback, a reduction in registered students and an academic decision to favour a more relevant module. <b>HA</b> added that SEF036 was going to be withdrawn, but it has been decided to allow the module to run for one more year. <b>TA</b> asked why this module was going to be withdrawn, <b>HA</b> answered that it was because schools were reviewing their foundation offering.</p>
<b>2(b)</b>	<p><b>Learning and teaching matters</b></p>
2019.021	<p>SEF031 Form and Function in Biology  <b>ZK</b> suggested that students should be provided with a specification for what they need to learn for exams e.g. which parts of the chapter to learn for the exams. <b>ZK</b> explained that at the end of each lecture the students are informed which chapters to read but would like to know which chapters are not needed. Some students would like more past MCQ questions to be made available. <b>SL</b> responded that more MCQ questions were also requested last year. The academics have a bank of MCQ questions that they randomly draw 50 questions from so they do not want to share the past MCQs in case the same questions come up in the exam. <b>ZK</b> noted that the students are able to see the format and type of MCQ questions used in the Mini in-class tests but some students would like more.</p> <p>SEF005 Physics – Mechanics and Materials  <b>YS</b> commented that Dr Kreouzis usually provides worked examples but there had recently been a gap in the notes and students were worried in the lead-up to the final assessments. <b>HA</b> explained that the gap may have been due to strike action and once Dr Kreouzis returns it is likely that he will catch up. <b>HA</b> reassured students that exam papers will take strike action into account. Instructions will be provided should any questions be affected.</p> <p>SEF038 Introduction to Modern Physics  <b>YS</b> noted that there is only one past paper available for SEF038 and that students would like more practice on Section B questions. <b>HA</b> suggested that this might be because Prof Dunstan was new to the module and may not want to use the previous material. <b>YS</b> asked if Prof Dunstan could provide a worksheet or something other than a past paper.</p> <p>SEF030 Communication in Science and Technology (CST)  <b>TA</b> reported that some home Maths students think that CST is irrelevant and that it is more for international students or other subjects in science and engineering. The</p>

	<p>Maths home students claim that they will no really use referencing in their Maths-based degrees so do not think that they need to complete CST. <b>HA</b> noted that it is true that more presentations take place in Biology and Engineering however, there is a choice for Maths students to do a presentation-based project in their third year. <b>HA</b> stated that the assessments in CST are providing students with key general skills that will be required in the workplace and there is always value in learning communication skills. <b>HA</b> suggested that students will often say they do not need something only to realise later that it would have been useful. CST also teaches students how to work in groups and learn how to manage others. <b>YS</b> added that learning how to present in front of people is something beneficial to everyone. <b>ZK</b> commented that she had personally found CST really useful and has been a real benefit.</p>
<b>B</b>	<b>Assessment and feedback</b>
2019.022	<p>SEF038 Introduction to Modern Physics <b>YS</b> reported an improvement in SEF038 and it is clear that the staff have listened to feedback.</p> <p>SEF034 Computing <b>TA</b> praised SEF034 lecturer Dharini Krishnamoorthy and said that she is very good at providing feedback, she is really fast and provides written comments.</p>
<b>2(d)</b>	<b>Academic support</b>
2019.023	<p><b>HA</b> asked the representatives for feedback about PASS. <b>ZK</b> confirmed that she has spoken to other students about PASS but has not felt the need to attend yet. She is confident that if she does need help then she knows where to go. <b>ZK</b> mentioned that the module she would likely need support with would be Mathematics A, which already has lots of support in place. <b>YS</b> reported that he was not aware of any peers attending PASS and that students usually favour YouTube explanations or re-visiting QReview. <b>TA</b> added that some Computing student had attended PASS and said that it was good for Python assignments.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> FEDU to email the PASS co-ordinator to ask about attendance.</p>
<b>2(f)</b>	<b>Learning resources</b>
2019.024	<p><b>YS</b> reported that the library blinds are an issue. Some of the blinds do not work and the sun shines on the tables making studying hard. This is particularly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor but generally all of them.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> FEDU to email Library to raise the issue with blinds.</p> <p><b>YS</b> noted that QReview was a useful resource for Physics and Maths lectures. However, he suggested that QReview could also be used for tutorials and small groups. For SEF038 the QReview has not been recording properly, the sound is very low and only the PC output is recorded.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> FEDU to find out if the lecturer has opted out of QReview recordings or if it is a technical issue.</p>

**Part 3 – Any Other Business**

2019.025

Strike Action  
**SL** asked the representatives if they had been affected by the Strike action.  
**YS** commented that he was not happy with the SEF030 CST presentation that was affected by the strike. He felt that recording audio over a PowerPoint would not be as effective as a presentation in terms of using tone of voice etc. **TA** and **ZK** agreed that as this was a one-off this solution was the fairest to all students. **YS** noted a change in pace in SEF005 lectures, leading up to the Strike action content was covered very quickly. **ZK** added that SEF031 students missed a lab practical but were given notice in advance. **SL** established from the representatives that all students were given advance notice of any disruption; no students were left waiting for an absent lecturer. **HA** remarked that although some situations were not ideal, they were in the students best interest and were fair to all students.

Exam Results  
**TA** asked when Semester A results are due to be released. **HA** confirmed that provisional results will be released ~6weeks after the exam period. The provisional results will be released on MySIS but will not be verified until June/July.

UCAS References for ISEFP students  
**YS** asked why Advisors are not able to provide predicted grades in references. **HA** explained that unlike school or 6<sup>th</sup> form, the advisors from QMUL do not yet know the students or their academic history. Since the students have not yet been through formal exams, there is not enough information to form predicted grades. Advisors cannot base predicted grades on coursework alone as the coursework format varies, it could just be based on group work or homework, which is not a true reflection.

**Part 4 – Date of the next meeting**

2019.026

The committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 19th February at 13:00 in Fogg 3.15.

## Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2019.019	Representatives to help promote and encourage students to complete the Timetabling survey due to be released in February.	SSLC representatives	When survey is released	tbc	
2019.023	FEDU to email the PASS co-ordinator to ask about attendance.	FEDU	asap	FEDU emailed Federico Vaghi, the Foundation PASS Student Organiser on 03/01/20.	No reply yet.
2019.024	FEDU to email Library to raise the issue with blinds.	FEDU	asap	FEDU emailed the library on 16/01/20 to check for updates on the blinds.	
2019.024	FEDU to find out if the SEF038 lecturer has opted out of QReview recordings or if it is a technical issue.	FEDU	asap	The lecturer did not opt out of QReview, there are technical issues with the venue.	As the module is over, there is not much we can do now.