

**Science and Engineering Foundation
Undergraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
Wednesday 30th October 2019**

Draft minutes

Staff members present:

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

Student members present:

Titilayo Adebuyi (TA)	SEFP (Mathematics)
Laura Chappell (LC)	SEFP (Physics)
Zainab Khan (ZK)	SEFP (Biological Sciences)
Seif Rashad (SR)	ISEFP - Engineering
Yousef Sakka (YS)	ISEFP - Engineering

Apologies for absence:

Karthik Dinavahi (KD)	SEFP (Engineering)
Dennis Singh (DS)	SEFP (Computer Science)

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	Welcome and introduction for new members
2019.001	HA welcomed all members present.
1(b)	Apologies for Absence
2019.002	The meeting noted the apologies from members as recorded above.
1(c)	Minutes of the previous meeting
2019.003	The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 05/12/18.
1(d)	Report on matters arising and actions taken
2019.004	The committee received a report on matters arising and noted the following: 2018.007.ii Disruption in Maths lectures The Course Representatives agreed that the lecture venues for SEF040/SEF041 Mathematics A and B have changed and therefore levels of disruption have reduced this year. YS reported that if noise is a problem, it

	tends to be students at the back of the lecture theatre and suggested that students could be limited to sit at the front.
1(e)	Terms of reference and membership
2019.005	The committee noted the terms and reference and membership of the Student Staff Liaison Committee.
1(f)	Admissions, induction and enrolment
2019.006	<p>The committee discussed the processes of induction including Welcome Week and noted the following:</p> <p>Activities organised centrally</p> <p>ZK noted that Welcome Week was useful, allowing student to become familiar with the buildings and having activities around campus helped the students find different rooms. YS suggested that the Help point would have been more helpful if it was at the front of the Queens' building or somewhere at the front of campus instead of Library Square. It was confusing to make your way to the centre of campus to the Help point before knowing where you should go. LC added that the signposting during Welcome Week was inconsistent, there were signs if you entered from GO Jones/Queens building but signposting was less clear entering at the Westfield Gate. The level of confusion was dependant on which entrance you used and the direction you were moving around campus. For example, the footprints from Library Square to Queens' Building were effective. SR agreed that it was difficult to find buildings and rooms around campus and that the QMUL app and map was the only thing that helped.</p> <p>YS indicated that he had a negative induction experience as the app was not working for him and he had issues with his timetable. He suggested that there should be ways to help students who do not have access to the app. SR agreed that enrolment was confusing, he was given a date and time and when he went to enrol he was sent away. LC praised the early enrolment process and noted how straightforward and calm it was. ZK also used early enrolment and commented that it was really easy and empty.</p> <p>SR and YS were disappointed that there were sports team trials before Welcome Week that some students did not know about. They suggested that more information should be emailed to students about Sports teams and societies before Welcome Week.</p>

	<p>LC added that the Fresher's Fair was well organised apart from the sports societies. They were not easy to find and some were missing, for example, there were no representatives for badminton. LC noted that the Walking tour was good however, there was a lack of flexibility and it did not consider those with mobility issues. LC was with a friend who had difficulty walking, the route did not appear to allow people to sit down or rest when they needed to. ZK and LC commented that the list of societies had duplicates on so it was not clear if there were two similar societies or if they were repeated by accident. If students were looking for a specific club then it might have been ok but if you wanted to browse it was not very well organised.</p> <p>Activities organised by the schools and/or Foundation Team</p> <p>LC expressed that Physics students were disappointed as they missed out on PsiStar events due to rearrangements that day and they still have not had a chance to meet.</p>
2019:006i	<p>Action: Pass this onto Physics, we must make allowances for Foundation students to attend PsiStar next year.</p>
2019:006ii	<p>All Course Representatives noted that the final Foundation talk of the week, Introduction to Central Services, only lasted for 5 minutes and was a negative end to the week.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to review the Introduction to Central Services Talk for next year.</p>
	<p>TA confirmed that the Maths Foundation students had met their advisors and had got to know each other. TA cannot remember any specific social activity for Maths Foundation students. ZK noted that Biological and Chemical Sciences did have an introductory talk and most students have met their advisors. ZK also found the 'Introduction to the lab' talk useful as it is very different to school. LC commented on the Physics quiz with foundation, first year students and lecturers. It was really nice and valuable to meet lecturers and other students. LC has met her advisor once and he has tried to arrange a second meeting but it has always clashed with teaching. SR added that he had met his advisor during Welcome Week but not since. Dr Raza Shah's talk was informative, it included details about progression and useful information about going into next year. SR feels that if he had a question or</p>

<p>2019:006iii</p> <p>2019:006iv</p>	<p>an issue he would approach the apartment rather than his advisor and was not clear about the role of advisors. ZK agreed that the role of an advisor was not explained and the students do not know why they need an advisor. ZK suggested that it would be helpful for students to be told what the advisors are for and why they might go to their advisor.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to send email to advisors to remind them to meet their advisees.</p> <p>YS queried if students miss a lot of information in Welcome Week, then why is it not obligatory? HA explained that due to visas we cannot make it compulsory, as some students are not able to arrive by this point.</p> <p>HA asked if the Course Representatives felt like they belonged to their schools after their experiences with Welcome week. ZK pointed out that first year students meet second and third year students during Welcome Week, but Foundation students did not get to meet students who had been through the Foundation the year before. HA explained that the Foundation Team did try to get ex-Foundation students but it was not possible.</p> <p>SR recommended that it would be better if it was interactive; where they can informally chat to ex-Foundation students. LC suggested that it did not have to be a talk, just an opportunity to chat and meet students who have already been through the same experience. HA asked if the Course Representatives would be happy to meet with the Foundation students during Welcome Week next year. All members present agreed.</p> <p>Action: FEDU to contact current Course Representatives during the planning of Welcome Week activities and invite them to relevant sessions.</p>
Part 2 – Programme Delivery and other matters	
2(a)	Programme/module developments and amendments
2019.007	<p>The committee reviewed proposed programme / module developments and amendments. The following feedback was received from student representatives:</p> <p>Removing electives:</p>

HA requested feedback on removing elective module choices for Foundation students. A fixed module diet would allow students to receive their timetables earlier and would mean it would be easier to schedule activities such as advisor meetings.

YS suggested that advisors could have advisor hours, **LC** countered that advisors often do provide office hours but these clash with Foundation lectures. **HA** explained that the lecturers have varied teaching schedules that change from week to week and that the timetable for Year 0 advisees will be different to Undergraduate advisees, so it is very difficult to find a time to suit everybody.

SR likes that there are compulsory and elective modules as this provides students with the opportunity to change modules as some modules are not necessary for the intended route or path. **ZK** added that as a Biological Sciences student, all of her module were compulsory and she enjoyed having a fixed module diet. As she didn't have any choice, it was fair because everybody had the same modules. **TA** commented that the Foundation year is different to the first year of a degree. In the first year of her Maths degree, she would expect to just have Maths modules, but right now she is taking Computer science and Physics modules and the choices are more broad. **TA** expressed concern for fixed module diets that contain compulsory modules such as Physics that are not related to her intended degree and that the students may not particularly like.

YS countered that SEF026 Essential Foundation Mathematics and SEF038 Introduction to Modern Physics were elective choices but he didn't really understand the difference in the modules. Now that he has attended more of the module, he fears that he has missed the opportunity to take an easier module and get a higher mark. **YS** expressed concern that having elective modules that are not equal in workload or difficulty is not fair and puts some students at a disadvantage. **YS** called for equality between student so that the whole cohort had levelled modules and nobody gets an advantage.

LC reported that many Physics students are disappointed that they are not allowed to take SEF038 Introduction to Modern Physics and feel like they are

	<p>missing out. LC suggested that students would be happy with fixed module diets if an explanation or rationale was provided as to why those particular modules had been made compulsory and how the modules chosen will benefit the students.</p> <p>SR favoured having fixed module diets but suggested that elective modules were useful for students who were unsure of what they wanted to progress onto and broader module options would allow them to discover what they want to do. HA explained that broader module options cannot be provided for everybody, open diets cannot be catered for.</p> <p>SR asked why Foundation students were not allowed to progress onto programmes 'with Management'? HA explained that 'with Management' programmes are joint programmes with the School of Business and Management and were intended for first year students only.</p>
2(b)	Learning and teaching matters
2019.008	<p>Representatives reported on learning and teaching matters and the following points were noted:</p> <p>SEF005 Physics - Mechanics and Materials</p> <p>SR noted that students would like more practise and application, for example SEF026 Essential Foundation Mathematics has a web book and a lot of resources. The recommended textbook for SEF005 is almost 20 years old and no longer published. The QMPlus quizzes are helpful because once completed they provide feedback and solutions. LC agreed with the lack of practise, and commented that students solve the quizzes in groups because they do not feel confident enough to do it themselves. ZK asked if there were any tutorials where the students can ask questions. LC and SR confirmed that there is a Workshop class where the lecturer answers a set question that is posted beforehand and goes through the solution and working. LC added that it would be more helpful if they were about to work through questions from the textbook.</p> <p>SR compared the SEF005 Workshop to the Maths A/B tutorial classes where students are in groups of ~25 students and are able to direct the session</p>

	<p>based on students' questions. LC and SR noted that the support provided in SEF040/SEF041 has made students feel underprepared in SEF005.</p> <p>YS explained that the questions in the textbook do not have solutions and students feel that it is very difficult to solve or learn something when the answers are not provided. YS suggested that Dr Kreouzis could solve the questions at the end of the textbook and upload these to QMPlus so that students could go through those in their own time. LC and SR agreed that the SEF005 lectures are fast-paced. Typically seven questions are covered per week with one example of each and if students do not understand that specific example then they are stuck.</p> <p>HA reminded the Course Representative about independent learning and reiterated the difference between university and school or college. HA recommended that the Course Representatives should manage their expectations and be prepared to work through answers themselves and build study groups.</p> <p>SEF038 Introduction to Modern Physics</p> <p>YS reported that students would like more numerical questions or worked examples. Students are beginning to stop attending because they are finding the concepts difficult to grasp. YS suggested that the module is misleading because students are not sure when they are expected to complete calculations or not. LC advised YS to ask the lecturer if they could go over past exam questions? YS established that the lecturer did go through exam questions which was very beneficial however, the last paper has not been helpful as the type of questions has changed and there is confusion over which parts of the questions are excluded.</p> <p>Action: Feedback to the SEF038 and SEF005 lecturers.</p>
2(c)	Assessment and feedback
2019.009	<p>Representatives reported on assessment and feedback processes and the following points were noted:</p> <p>SEF030 Communication in Science and Technology (CST)</p>

	<p>LC reported that her CST tutor had informed the group that CST posters would be marked in one week but two weeks had already passed. ZK explained that her CST tutor is the module organiser and they were told that marks would be returned in Week 8 as each group had to be moderated. LC commented that the timescale is not a problem, students would prefer to be told the correct information.</p>
2(d)	Academic support
2019.010	<p>Representatives reported on academic support matters and the following points were noted:</p> <p>Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS)</p> <p>HA asked if any of the Course Representatives had heard of or used PASS. TA confirmed that the students had received emails about PASS but had not attended yet. LC commented that she had not received any emails. There was some uncertainty about the time and venues of PASS sessions and whether all students had received the information via email or not. TA asked if it was possible for Foundation students to volunteer as PASS Mentors next year. HA explained that this was the first year that PASS was available for all Foundation students and that it would be great for ex-Foundation students to become mentors in the future.</p> <p>Action: Information about Foundation PASS sessions will be sent again to the whole cohort.</p>
2(e)	Organisation and communication
2019.011	<p>Representatives reported on organisation and communication matters and the following points were noted:</p> <p>UCAS Support</p> <p>ZK noted that International Foundation students are concerned about applying through UCAS for next year as UCAS support is not provided. ZK reported that a student had asked for UCAS help and was not provided with much guidance. YS and SR agreed, they suggested that there could be UCAS session held for the ISEFP students to help them with the process and with their personal statements. HA confirmed that a UCAS sessions will be arranged for December. The Course Representatives suggested that it should have been arranged sooner as the submission deadline is January.</p>

	Action: FEDU to arrange a UCAS session and notify students.
2(f)	Learning resources
2019.012	Representatives reported on learning resources matters and the following points were noted: YS reported that QMPlus was sometimes unavailable. SL explained that this was a university-wide problem and actions have been put in place to reduce the impact on staff and students. YS agreed that it did seem to be improving compared to the first few weeks of this semester.
2(g)	Student feedback (Module evaluations)
2019.013	HA and SL promoted the upcoming Module Evaluations and explained the importance of the feedback received.
Part 3 – Any Other Business	
2019.014	All of the points were raised in the relevant section.
Part 4 – Date of the next meeting	
2019.015	The committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 4th December at 13:00.

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue resolved?
2019:006i	Pass this onto Physics, we must make allowances for Foundation students to attend PsiStar next year.	FEDU	In time for Welcome Week planning – February 2020	Email sent 11/11/19	Physics confirmed that they did plan for Foundation students to attend but a late change in room bookings meant they were unable to accommodate the Foundation students at the original time. There was another session that students were invited to but it clashed with the Foundation Welcome talk. Foundation students will of course be considered next year.
2019:006ii	FEDU to review the Introduction to Central Services Talk for next year.	FEDU	In time for Welcome Week		Instead of a talk, FEDU will send an email with URL links

			planning – February 2020		for the information videos and guides from these services.
2019:006iii	FEDU to send email to advisors to remind them to meet their advisees.	FEDU	ASAP	Email sent 11/11/19	Yes
2019:006iv	FEDU to contact current Course Representatives during the planning of Welcome Week activities and invite them to relevant sessions.	FEDU	In time for Welcome Week planning – February 2020		
2019:008	Feedback to the SEF038 and SEF005 lecturers.	FEDU	ASAP	Minutes sent 11/11/09	
2019:010	Information about Foundation PASS sessions will be sent again to the whole cohort.	FEDU	ASAP	Sent on 05/11/19	Yes
2019:011	FEDU to arrange a UCAS session and notify students.	FEDU	ASAP	Session arrange for November 25 th .	Yes