School of Mathematical Sciences
Postgraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee
17th June 2020 Minutes

Staff members present:

Name	Role
Sebastian Del Bano Rollin (SdBR)	Chair
Mark Walters (MW)	Director of Education
Michael Phillips (MP)	Director of Postgraduate Taught Studies (DPTS)
Primoz Skraba (PS)	MSc Data Analytics Programme Director
Neofytos Rodosthenous (NR)	MSc Mathematical Finance/MSc Financial Computing Programme Director
Alexander Gnedin (AG)	MSc Mathematics Programme Director
Sukhpal Gill (SG)	Lecturer in Cloud Computing-School of Science and Engineering, EECS Representative
James Soderman (JS)	Faculty Liaison Librarian – School of Science and Engineering
Olumide Popoola (OP)	Student Study Skills Coordinator – Library Services
Simon Rawstron (SAR)	Education Services Manager
William NG (WN)	Student Support Officer
Maria Patsou (MP)	Secretary

Student members present:

Name	Programme name and level
Camilo Blanco Vargas (CBV)	MSc Financial Computing Course Representative
Stuti Malik (SM)	MSc Mathematics Course Representative
Shane Richardson (SR)	MSc Data Analytics Course Representative
Muhammad Abdulmuntaqim (MA)	MSc Financial Computing Course Representative

Apologies for absence:

Name	Programme name and level / role
Boris Khoruzhenko (BK)	Head of School
Stefan Couch (SC)	Careers Consultant
Jon Strathdee (JS)	Employer Engagement and Internships Coordinator (EEIC)

Part 1 – Preliminary Items	
1(a)	**Welcome and introduction for new members**
2019.097	SdBR welcomed all members to the Virtual meeting, and all members introduced themselves (including their role or programme). SdBR explained the protocols for the Virtual meeting.
1(b)	**Apologies for Absence**
2019.098	The meeting noted the apologies of members as recorded above.
1(c)	**Minutes of the previous meeting**
2019.099	The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd April 2020.
1(d)	**Report on actions taken and matters arising**
2019.100	2019.032i: <mark>SG to chase up this item.</mark> 2019.040i: SdBR consulted with SC who confirmed he does not have the capacity to carry out these sessions at the moment. SdBR will organise and carry out the sessions himself after completing grading. 2019.056: SdBR chased up the item regarding access to GPU clusters with Thomas Prellberg (SMS IT Lead) who confirmed that students have access to the HPC cluster (but not the GPUs on this cluster) if this is supported by a project supervisor. See https://docs.hpc.qmul.ac.uk/, in particular https://docs.hpc.qmul.ac.uk/intro/hpc-account/ 2019.059: WN confirmed that email accounts will be available to alumni for 6 months after the project submission, but that this period may be extended due to the pandemic. SdBR mentioned that QMUL emails are used to gain free access to several third party systems (Bloomberg, and DataCamp.com) and so students should not postpone taking advantage of these resources. 2019.069: Relevant changes to the programme websites and to coursefinder websites, have been applied. 2019.074: SdBR confirmed that all PGT students have remote access to Bloomberg Terminal System. 2019.075: MP (DPTS) confirmed that dissertations were extended by one working week, therefore the new deadline to submit dissertations is 11th September 2020. 2019.076: MP (DPTS) confirmed that there is no minimum or word count for dissertations. It is suggested that the dissertations are 30-40 pages long and no more than 60 pages. MP (DPTS) advised to discuss this further with supervisors.

	2019.078: MP (DPTS) asked for clarification on this item. MW advised that students would like to find out how 30 credits get discounted as part of a dissertation. MP (DPTS) noted that it may be possible to discount part of the project, but this would have to be confirmed with Dr Lawrence Pettit. <mark>MP (DPTS) to chase this item and confirm.</mark> 2019.080: Students have yet to receive marks. MA emailed the lecturer for Scientific Computing, but since then marks have still not been uploaded onto QMPlus. <mark>MP (DPTS) to chase this again.</mark> 2019.088: MP (DPTS) confirmed that the deadline for obtaining an internship has been extended by a month (1st September 2020). 2019.089: Emails have been sent out to students with information exceptional extenuating circumstances processes during the Covid-19 pandemic. 2019.091: WN confirmed that information has been sent out via email. QMPlus is next, as there were previously issues with updating the website. <mark>This action is still open.</mark> 2019.093. WN spoke to Dr Sarfo and information has now been sent to students.
1(e)	**Terms of reference and membership**
2019.101	Nothing to report
1(f)	**Admission, induction and enrolment**
2019.102	Nothing to report
Part 2 - Programme Delivery and Other Matters	
2(a)	**Programme/module developments and amendments**
2019.103	MP (DPTS) confirmed that the MSc in Data Analytics will now also have a January start, in addition to the September one.
2019.104	MP (DPTS) noted the School is working on the delivery of teaching for next year.

2 (b)	**Learning and teaching matters**
2019.105	CBV queried about how the rest of the teaching and industry lectures are taking place. MP (DPTS) noted that it is not still certain how teaching will be delivered next year, but the School is trying to organise online learning. With regards to industry lectures, these are more challenging to organise and there is no guarantee they can still take place online.
2019.106	MA queried about how students can access Java resources. SdBR advised that he is not aware of QMUL resources in this topic and will advise if anything comes to his attention. In the meantime he mentioned there are many online free resources.
2(c)	**Assessment and feedback**
	Alternative Assessments and Marks
2019.107	CBV noted that it has been difficult to communicate with the students during this time as everyone is focusing on projects. CBV received no complaints about doing online, alternative assessments.
2019.108	SR noted that it would be better to complete an assignment than an exam, as it is possible that in the 24-hour slot students will end spending a lot more time than they would in a usual 3-hour exam setting.
2019.109	CBV and MA noted that students have been asking about when SEM B marks will be released. SAR referred reps to communications sent out to students recently listing the 28th July as the provisional marks release date and the 10th August the final marks release date.
2019.110	In reference to action 2019.080 from the previous meeting, MTH785P Programming for Business Analytics grades for Assessment 3 were released prior to the meeting. SR noted that students are now getting quite frustrated as it has taken 6 months to release marks for one assessment and there are still marks outstanding from SEM A, MTH739U Topics in Scientific Computing. SdBR noted that the module grew rapidly this year which had a knock-on effect on marking. SR noted that if this is the case more resources need to be allocated to the module. MP (DPTS) had communications with the lecturer of MTH739U Topics in Scientific Computing who, on the 4th May said that he expected to release marks in two weeks' time. This will be chased again by MP (DTPS), as reported in action 2019.80.

2019.111	SM queried about the release of Applied Statistics project marks. MW noted that these will be available along with the rest of the results in July provisionally and in August officially.
	Dissertations
2019.112	SM queried about the date of dissertation marks release. MP (DPTS) confirmed these will be out in November.
2019.113	SM queried about whether a presentation/viva is required. MP (DPTS) confirmed there is no presentation involved in dissertations.
2019.114	SM queried about whether supervisors give a plan of the list of things to cover in the dissertation or whether it is up to students to decide on the pace of working? MP (DTPS) advised to discuss this point with supervisors.
2019.115	SM queried about whether students there are any marks for coding and reproducing the results or just for the mathematical explanations for dissertations. MP (DPTS) advised that this depends on the project.

	Academic support
2019.116	CBV noted that students are receiving substantial support from SC, MP (DPTS) and SdBR.
2(e)	**Organisation and communication**
2019.117	There was extensive discussion about the best way in which students can come together. At the moment students are using and are in favour of Whatsapp and it is possible for a link to be produced which can be sent to every student to join. SR noted that this is an uncensored way of communicating to each other as opposed to a university construct like Microsoft Teams, however phone numbers are visible in an application like this which is not necessarily what students want. MP encouraged students to use Microsoft teams as not everyone may have access to Whatsapp. CBV noted that Whatsapp is on your phone and very easy to access.
2(f)	**Learning resources & Careers** ● **Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.)** ● **QMplus** ● **Q-Review** ● **Updates from faculty E-learning forums** ● **IT**
2019.118	CBV and MA relayed a concern that students have with job hunting next year considering the constraints that Covid-19 has brought to economies and queried about whether the university can support with resources specific to this situation.
2019.119	OP informed the committee that dissertation workshops are available to students through the library and that it is possible to hold bespoke meetings for a specified group of students too. This information has been circulated to the student. https://library.qmul.ac.uk/mastersdissertationsupport/ Course reps should feel free to get in touch regarding dissertation writing workshops for SMS PGT students.
2019.120	CBV queried about whether it is possible to set up a page all the resources that students can still access, so that everything is in one place. SdBR to speak to SC in order to add resources in the employability page on QMPlus.
2(g)	**Student feedback (NSS/PTES/QMSS/Modules evaluations)**
2019.121	Please refer to action 2019.094.
Part 3-Any Other Business	
2019.122	SM queried about when graduations are and it was confirmed they are in December.
2019.123	SR: There was an issue with some marks being visible to the students. MP (DPTS) and WN confirmed they are aware and are working on the issue.
Part 4-Date of next meeting	
2019.124	TBC

Action Sheet: Student-Staff Liaison Committee

Minute	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Action status	Issue Resolved?
2019.032i	MW to contact EECS counterpart to escalate the concerns over ECS708U/P Machine Learning due to missed teaching (strike) and imminent coursework submissions.	SG	ASAP	From previous meeting.	
2019.078	Follow up on distinction rules for dissertations under COVID-19 changes and confirm to students.	MP (DPTS)	ASAP	From previous meeting.	
2019.080	Chase up marks for SEM A.	MP (DPTS)	ASAP	From previous meeting.	
2019.091	Add library support information onto QMPlus PGT Dissertation page, upon Rep request.	OP	ASAP	From previous meeting	
2019.120	SdBR to speak to SC in order to add resources in the employability page on QMPlus.	SdBR	By next meeting	New	