

**School of Mathematical Sciences  
Postgraduate Student Staff Liaison Committee  
23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 Minutes**

**Staff members present:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Sebastian Del Bano Rollin (SdBR)	Chair SSLC PGT Meeting
Mark Walters (MW)	Director of Education
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
Shukhpal 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
Paul Dudley (PD)	PA to Head of School

**Student members present:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Programme name and level</b>
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 Abdilmuntaqim (MA)	MSc Financial Computing Course Representative

**Apologies for absence:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Programme name and level / role</b>
Michael Phillips (MP)	Director of Postgraduate Taught Studies (DPTS)
Boris Khoruzhenko (BK)	Head of School
Maria Turner (MT)	Education Services Administrator
Stefan Couch (SC)	Careers Consultant

Jon Strathdee (JS)	Employer Engagement and Internships Coordinator (EEIC)
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<b>Part 1 – Preliminary Items</b>	
<b>1(a)</b>	<b>Welcome and introduction for new members</b>
2019.066	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.
<b>1(b)</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
2019.067	The meeting noted the apologies of members as recorded above.
<b>1(c)</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>
2019.068	The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2020.
<b>1(d)</b>	<b>Report on actions taken and matters arising</b>
2019.069	<p><b>2019.032i</b> There was some confusion over whether this action had been completed or not as it appeared twice in the actions list once as 'pending' and once as 'completed-to be discussed in the next meeting'. MW checked with CBV if this is still an issue and the Rep confirmed students were not happy with their marks and missed learning due to strikes. <b>MW will follow up with the particular action to check its status.</b></p> <p><b>2019.040i</b> SdBR confirmed that students should approach SC for careers advice. <b>SdBR to check with SC if arranging small group careers sessions, is possible.</b></p> <p><b>2019.053</b> SdBR confirmed he attended Pedro Vergel's lecture; this action has been completed.</p> <p><b>2019.056</b> AG and SdBR noted that industry links are available within the school and that it is best for students to discuss individually with supervisors, but they want to avoid students going into industry and doing something that is unsupervised. MW noted that it is unlikely that industry dissertations will take place this year due to COVID-19. SR, noted that the wording of the website for Data Analytics gave the impression that industry links are available and that if this is not the case then the School need to re-consider the website wording. <b>SdBR to raise the wording of the Data Analytics website to MP (DPTS), to reflect exact nature of links with industry.</b></p> <p>SdBR noted that access to clusters was available but not so much GPU Clusters. <b>MW to look into GPU Clusters access during the lockdown.</b></p> <p><b>2019.59</b> WN noted that feedback from IT said that email shuts down within a year or less, however the Alumni team seems to think it is more than that. The advice is that people start gradually to move content that is important out of their email accounts toward the end of their degree and start using personal addresses. SdBR noted that some software requires an institutional login. <b>WN to follow up and get a final confirmation on length of institutional email life.</b></p>

<b>1(e)</b>	<b>Terms of reference and membership</b>
2019.070	Nothing to report
<b>1(f)</b>	<b>Admission, induction and enrolment</b>
2019.071	Nothing to report
<b>Part 2 - Programme Delivery and Other Matters</b>	
	<p>SdBR noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback in SSLCs needs to be representative of the voices of most or all students rather than just the personal opinions of Representatives.</li> <li>• It is best that issues are first raised with whoever is directly involved (the module lecturer, the student advisor, then the programme director) and the SSLC can be a last resort for issues, after all other avenues are exhausted.</li> </ul>
<b>2(a)</b>	<b>Programme/module developments and amendments</b>
2019.072	Nothing to report

<b>2 (b)</b>	<b>Learning and teaching matters</b>
2019.073	The Reps noted that the efforts to move content online were acknowledged and appreciated, but that also online arrangements for modules were very different across different modules. They noted that students preferred live lectures as they were the closest to the previous lectures, that QMPlus has worked well, and that levels of attendance were good as people who may not have engaged in lectures on-campus for various reasons, found it easier to log in and attend. SR noted that Blackboard Collaborate worked best for him, as it was a live lecture. Other lectures included live Q&A with pre-recorded lectures and pre-recorded lectures and notes.
2019.074	MA asked how people can access Bloomberg remotely. For seminars, online enrolment is needed in advance. <b>SdBR to look into remote Bloomberg access.</b>
<b>2(c)</b>	<b>Assessment and feedback</b>
	<b>Dissertations</b>
2019.075	There was confusion regarding the dissertation deadline. Two emails were sent out, one with the deadline extended by two weeks, and one with the original deadline. SAR confirmed the email with the original deadline is the final one. <b>SAR to communicate to MP (DPTS) a student-wide wish to re-consider extending the deadline for dissertations by two weeks.</b>
2019.076	Relaxation of marking criteria along with minimum word count for dissertations were brought up in the meeting by SR and discussed due to lessened productivity as a result of not meeting supervisors in person, Regarding minimum word count, QMPlus does not have this information. AG noted that 40 pages would be a minimum. <b>MW to discuss with senior academics about minimum page count on dissertations and get back to students.</b>
2019.077	On dissertation work, SM queried when to start working. MW advised for students to speak to their supervisors and SdBR noted that usually students do the most important part of their work after the exams.
2019.078	CBV's queried how a distinction is established at the moment with dissertations. <b>MW to follow up on distinction rules for dissertations under COVID-19 changes and confirm to students.</b>

2019.079	<p>ST queried about dissertation meetings, and SdBR replied that they will all be online-as everything else. AG noted that it is between the supervisor and the student to decide the best method of communication. SdBR noted that it is important that students focus on the exams right now but can meet with supervisors as early as they wish to. In response to CBV's query about changing supervisors, it was confirmed that they can speak to all senior academics, i.e. MP (DPTS), their programme director, AG or SdBR.</p> <p><b>Exams</b></p>
2019.080	<p>CBV noted that there have been delays with module marks in both semesters and that he had talked to Pedro Vergel about it for one of SEM B's modules. <b>MP (DPTS) to chase up marks for SEM A module.</b></p>
2019.081	<p>The Reps would like clarification on final exam dates, as students were confused with some of the dates being different on MySIS from the emails they received about alternative assessment. After a check during the meeting, SAR confirmed that all changes have fed into MySIS so these would be the final dates. However, SAR encouraged Reps to let him know if there were any more queries.</p>
2019.082	<p>The Reps requested clarification on exam timings. It was confirmed that no exams will take place on campus, and MW clarified that all MTH assessments have a 24-hour window to allow for people in different time zones to take the exam but that each assessment should not take more than 3 hours to complete, as an exam on campus would. MW noted that the start time is the time mentioned on MySIS, and that staggering the start time means that QMPlus can work faster, as students will not enter the website all at once. WN noted that students will SEAs will be able to add their own extra time, and that there will be no extension to the 24-hour period. SG noted that all EECS exams would have 48-hour slots.</p>
2019.083	<p>SR queried about accessing mock exams considering the structure of the exam will change. MW noted that while the exam will be taken online, the structure will be more or less the same as previous years. SM queried about sample papers. MW noted that sample papers will only be made available if the exam is different from before. Individual Module Organisers will inform students if this is the case.</p>
2019.084	<p>SM requested clarity about how 20% of the past four weeks' worth of material will only be examinable. MW confirmed that this is the case, and that it is agreed that the majority of the examinable material will be from before the lockdown. However there are a couple of exceptions, where, for example, a theorem has been building throughout the term and it is not possible to remove from the assessment. After the scrutiny committee convenes it will be agreed how these exceptions will be handled and students will be informed accordingly through QMPlus. SM queried about whether mock exams can be run.</p>
2019.085	<p>In response to SM's question on re-takes, MW noted that the rules remain the same.</p>
2019.086	<p>SM queried about shifting exam dates. SdBR noted that putting exams together is a monumental university-wide task and it would not be possible to change. MW also noted that these essentially have been pushed back already by two weeks. He also noted the fact that with 24-hour exams it is impossible to have more than one exam in a day, whereas with on-campus exams this could have been a possibility, therefore there is less of a burden to the students to complete exams, in the current format.</p>

<b>2(d)</b>	<b>Academic support</b>
2019.087	Nothing to report
<b>2(e)</b>	<b>Organisation and communication</b>
2019.088	CBV queried about an extension to getting an internship on the Financial Computing programme, as students are having trouble securing internships due to the lockdown and are concerned about visas attached to the internship programme. <b>SdBR to raise an extension query to securing internships to Claire Revell.</b>
2019.089	In response to extenuating circumstances queries on missed assessments, SAR reminded that all queries should go to <a href="mailto:maths@qmul.ac.uk">maths@qmul.ac.uk</a> where the Education Services Team can deal with them. MW noted that extenuating circumstances this year are very relaxed. There is a lot of information at the moment out there and the School is looking to put everything together and send communications out to students. OP suggested to do it in the form of a podcast or video. MW agreed this could be a good method to gather the information. <b>MW to look into putting together information on extenuating circumstances through a video or podcast.</b>
2019.090	SdBR checked with students if, at the moment, they are overwhelmed with information over email about their studies; CBV confirmed that the information is good but perhaps should be added to more platforms/channels, like QMPlus.
<b>2(f)</b>	<b>Learning resources &amp; Careers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Library facilities / materials (books, journals etc.)</b></li> <li>• <b>QMplus</b></li> <li>• <b>Q-Review</b></li> <li>• <b>Updates from faculty E-learning forums</b></li> <li>• <b>IT</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Library facilities</b>
2019.091	In response to queries about library sessions, OP noted that there will be virtual sessions relating to writing, structure and style. Details of PGT support can be found here: <a href="https://qmulprod.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/LibraryTeachingLearningSupportTeam/EVJWeRLXthhEob5VjXC02kcBH_cWZLAjgqjA8gqtwCC0VQ?e=Wg88Ng">https://qmulprod.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/LibraryTeachingLearningSupportTeam/EVJWeRLXthhEob5VjXC02kcBH_cWZLAjgqjA8gqtwCC0VQ?e=Wg88Ng</a> <b>OP to add library support information onto QMPlus PGT Dissertation page, upon Rep request.</b>
2019.092	JS updated the committee that students should go the library website as there is a lot of information on new operations. He will be carrying out workshops on Mandeley and Endnote. With regards to returns, library will contact students about arrangements. If students want to return a book they need to contact the library at <a href="mailto:library@qmul.ac.uk">library@qmul.ac.uk</a> and do it by post. Online books can still be loaned.
	<b>QMPlus</b>
2019.093	It was noted that the SAS certificate page is no longer available on QMPlus even though the exam is still taking place. SdBR advised for students to check with Seth Safro. <b>WN to check with Dr Safro and get back to Rep via email about SAS certificate page on QMPlus.</b>

<b>2(g)</b>	<b>Student feedback (NSS/PTES/QMSS/Modules evaluations)</b>
2019.094	WN has asked Reps to communicate to students to complete the Postgraduate Student Experience Survey. All Reps to help disseminate the message about completing the Postgraduate Student Experience Survey.
<b>Part 3-Any Other Business</b>	
2019.095	CBV queried about the Visa process for next year: SdBR says that the plan is to continue running programmes the same way, but the Visa process is something that will be communicated by the University to individual applicants.
<b>Part 4-Date of next meeting</b>	
2019.096	TBC-Preferably not during the exams



### 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.	MW	Next meeting	From previous meeting-MW to clarify status by next meeting	
2019.040i	Arranging small group careers sessions	SdBR	Next Meeting	From previous meeting-SdBR to chase up with SC	
2019.056	Projects – (Dissertations done in industry and accessing clusters) SdBR will look into student access to QMUL compute clusters and advise	MW	ASAP	From previous meeting-MW to look into GPU Clusters access during the lockdown	
2019.059	To ascertain the correct information regarding the length of time QMUL email is active after graduation as the information on Alumni Page, IT and QMUL web is different	WN	Next Meeting	From previous meeting-WN to get a final confirmation on length of email accounts	
2019.069	Raise the wording of the Data Analytics website with MP (DPTS), to reflect exact nature of links with industry.	SdBR	Next meeting	New	
2019.074	Look into remote Bloomberg access.	SdBR	ASAP	New	
2019.075	Communicate to MP (DPTS) a student-wide wish to re-consider extending the deadline for dissertations by two weeks.	SAR	ASAP	New	

2019.076	Discuss with senior academics about minimum page count on dissertations and get back to students.	MW	ASAP	New	
2019.078	Follow up on distinction rules for dissertations under COVID-19 changes and confirm to students.	MW	ASAP	New	
2019.080	Chase up marks for the SEM A module.	MP (DPTS)	ASAP	New	
2019.088	Raise extension to securing internships to Claire Revell.	SdBR	ASAP	New	
2019.089	Look into putting together information on extenuating circumstances through a video or podcast.	MW	ASAP	New	
2019.091	Add library support information onto QMPlus PGT Dissertation page, upon Rep request.	OP	ASAP	New	
2019.093	Check with Dr Safro and get back to Reps via email about missing information on SAS certificate page on QMPlus.	WN	ASAP	New	
2019.094	Help disseminate the message about completing the Postgraduate Student Experience Survey.	All Reps	ASAP	New	

